JUMP COMICS

賭

巻ノ十八

NARUTO

-ナルト-

岸本斉史

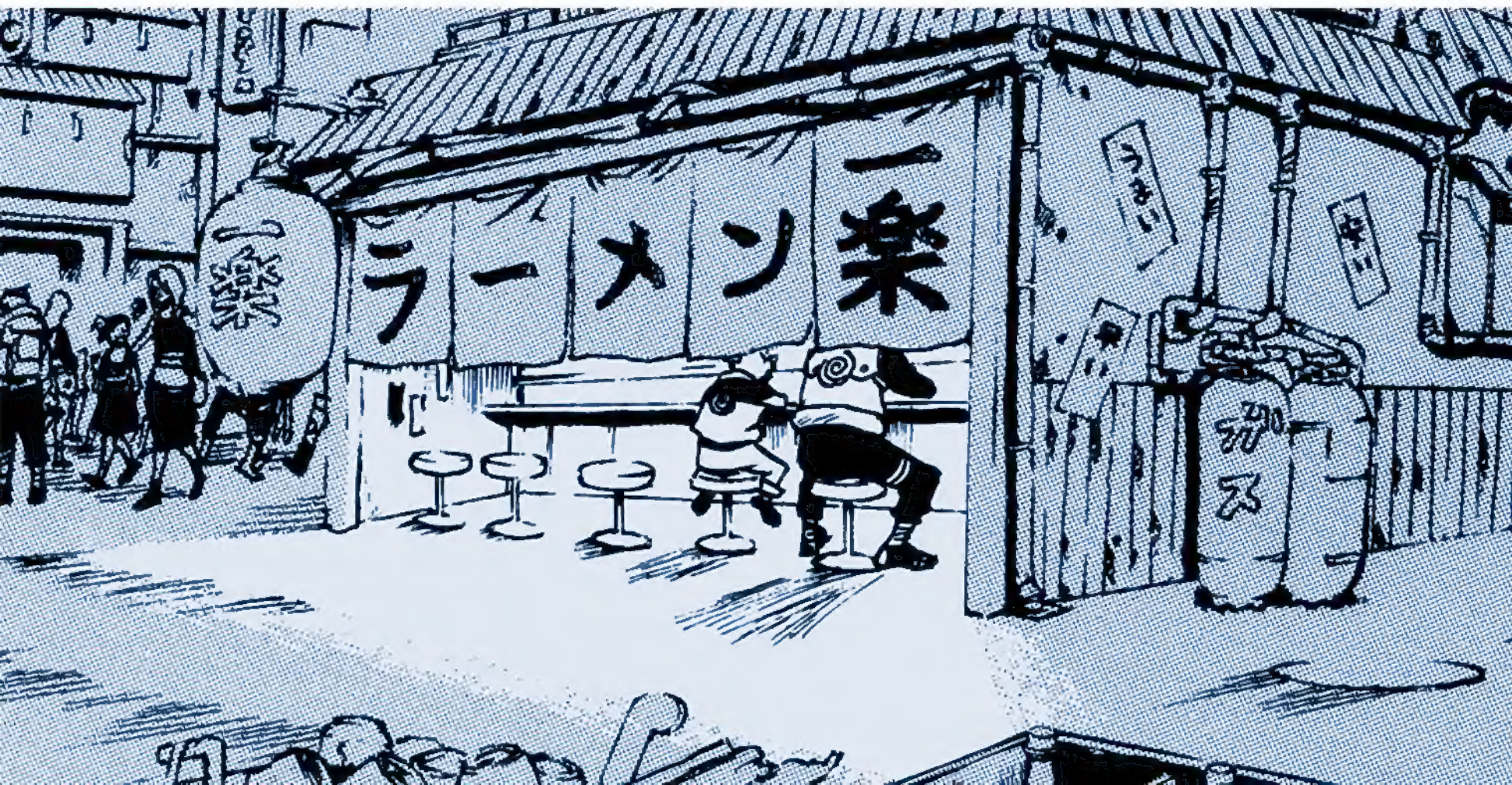
新手の決まり!!

岸本斉史

Recently, my shoulder pain has been getting worse...And it seems to always be my left shoulder. Why does my left shoulder get stiff when I'm right-handed? It's one of the Seven Great Mysteries of Kishimoto.

—*Masashi Kishimoto, 2003*

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.



JUMP COMICS

NARUTO
-ナルト-

巻ノ十八

綱手(ツナデ)の決意(けつい)!!

岸本斉史

主な登場人物

うちは
サスケ

うずまき
ナルト

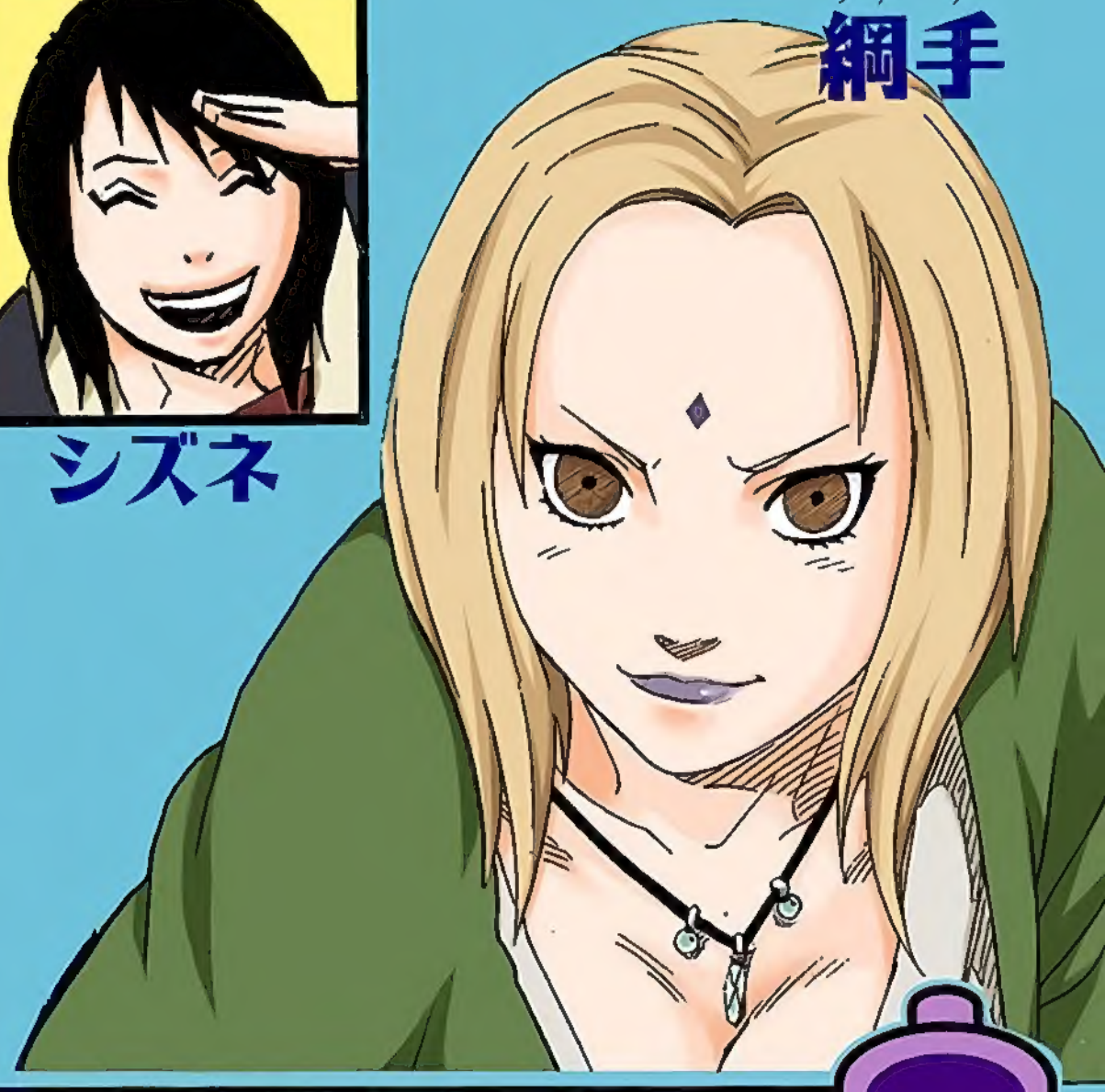
春野サクラ

大蛇丸

薬師カブト

自来也（じらいや）

シズネ



綱手（ツナデ）

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NARUTO

VOL. 18
TSUNADE'S CHOICE

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ナンバー

154：CONVERGENCE

(SIGN: PACHINKO)

I KNOW A LITTLE BIT ABOUT LADY TSUNADE TOO, YOU KNOW.

SINCE... I WAS PART OF THE MEDICAL CORPS AT ONE POINT.

HMM ...

SHE WAS THE FIRST ONE TO PROPOSE...

...HAVING A MEDICAL SPECIALIST IN THE BASIC FOUR-MAN UNIT.

SOMETHING WE TAKE FOR GRANTED THESE DAYS...

BUT BACK THEN, IT WAS A GROUND-BREAKING NOTION.

IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS WHAT HAPPENS TO ORDINARY FIGHTING UNITS WITHOUT EMERGENCY MEDICAL EXPERTISE...

...ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

HUMPH ...

IT WAS PURE AND SIMPLE WAR EXPERIENCE THAT LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THAT IDEA...

.....

...SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD ONLY RESULT IN...

...THE SACRIFICE OF SO MANY LIVES.

AND WHAT BROUGHT ABOUT ONE OF THE LEGENDARY THREE SHINOBI...

...THE DECISION TO BECOME A MEDICAL SPECIALIST...

FLUTTER

FLIT

FLIT

PEOPLE ONLY REALIZE THE TRUE VALUE OF SOMETHING AFTER THEY HAVE LOST IT.

...WAS SIMPLY THE DESIRE TO AVOID MORE LOSS OF LIFE...

FLIT

FLIT

FLIT

...UNH... UGH...

OWW... IT HURTS ...

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

ROLL...

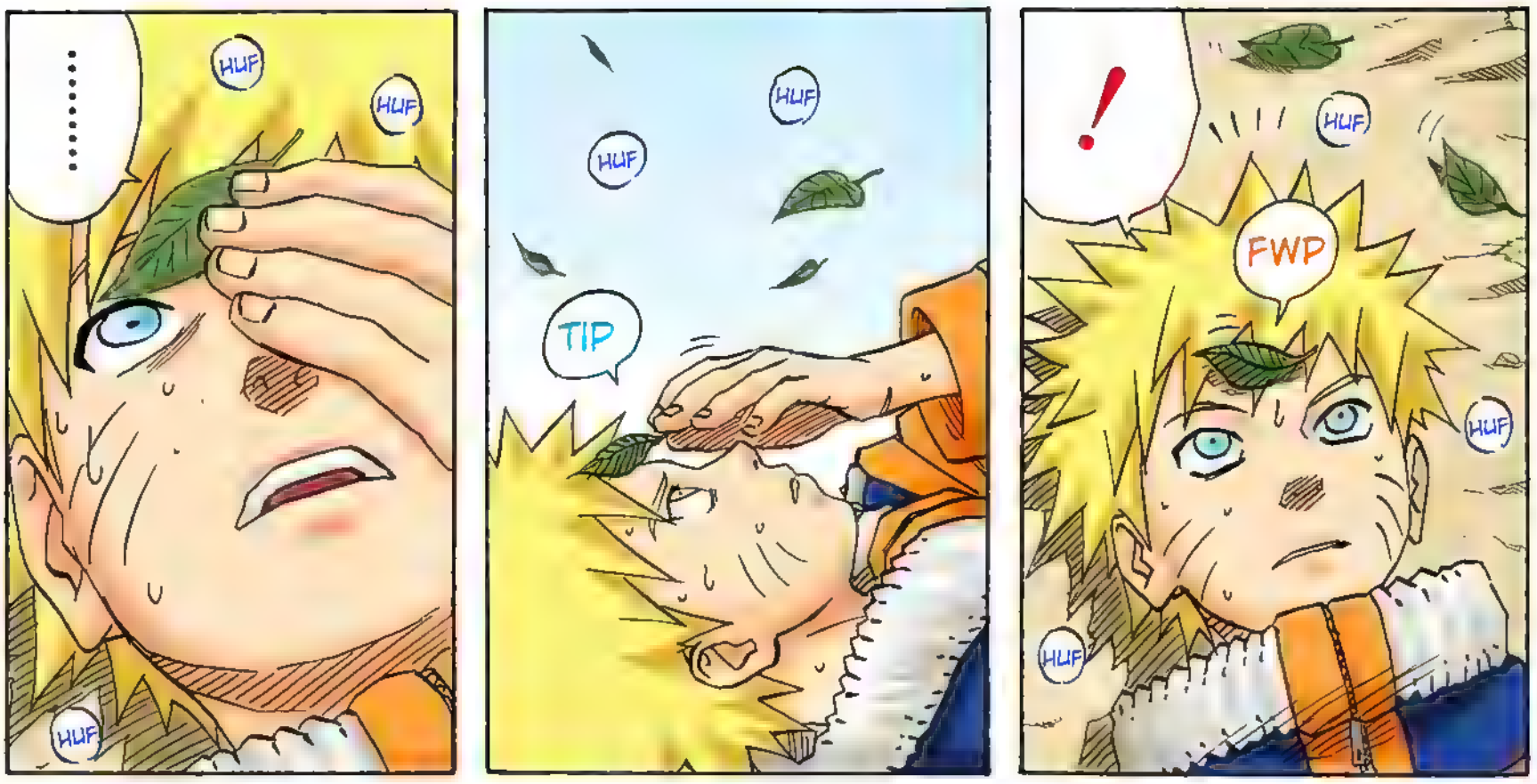
I GOTTA TAKE A BREAK...

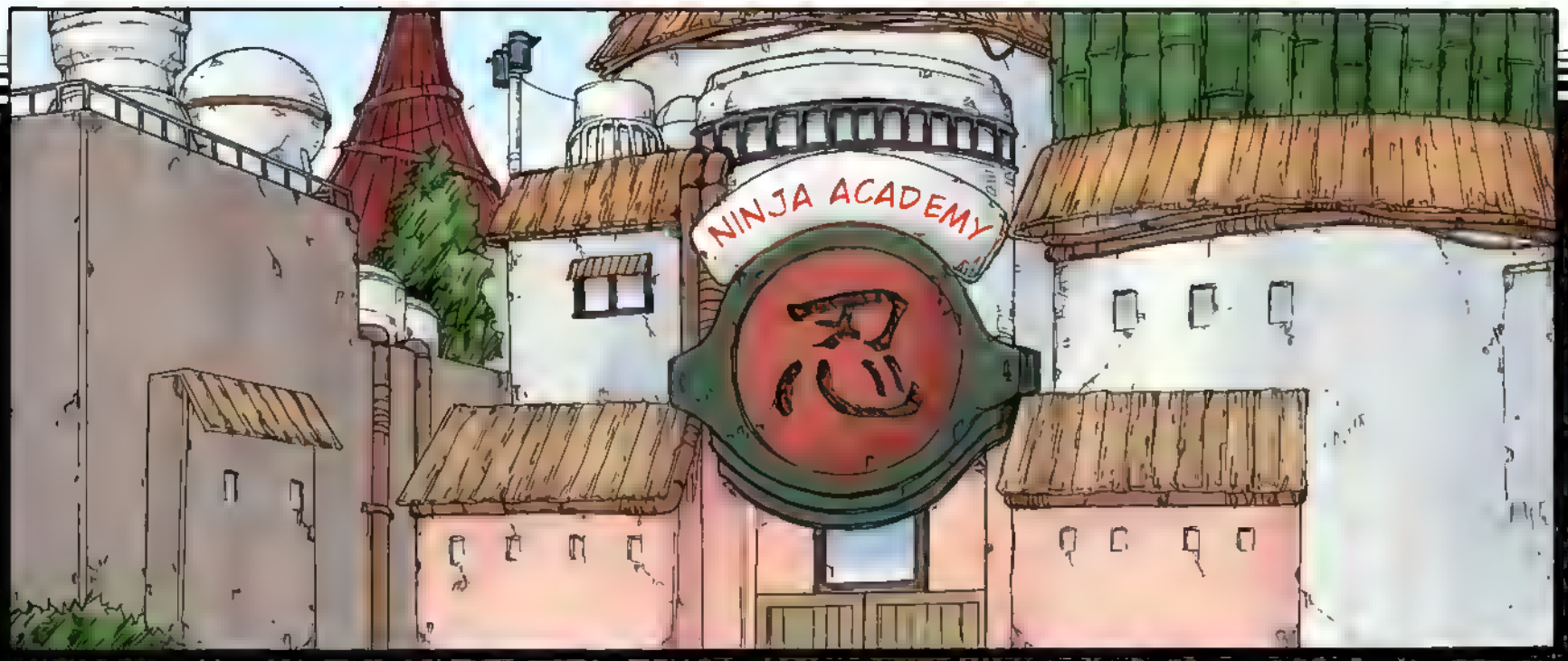
TUMP

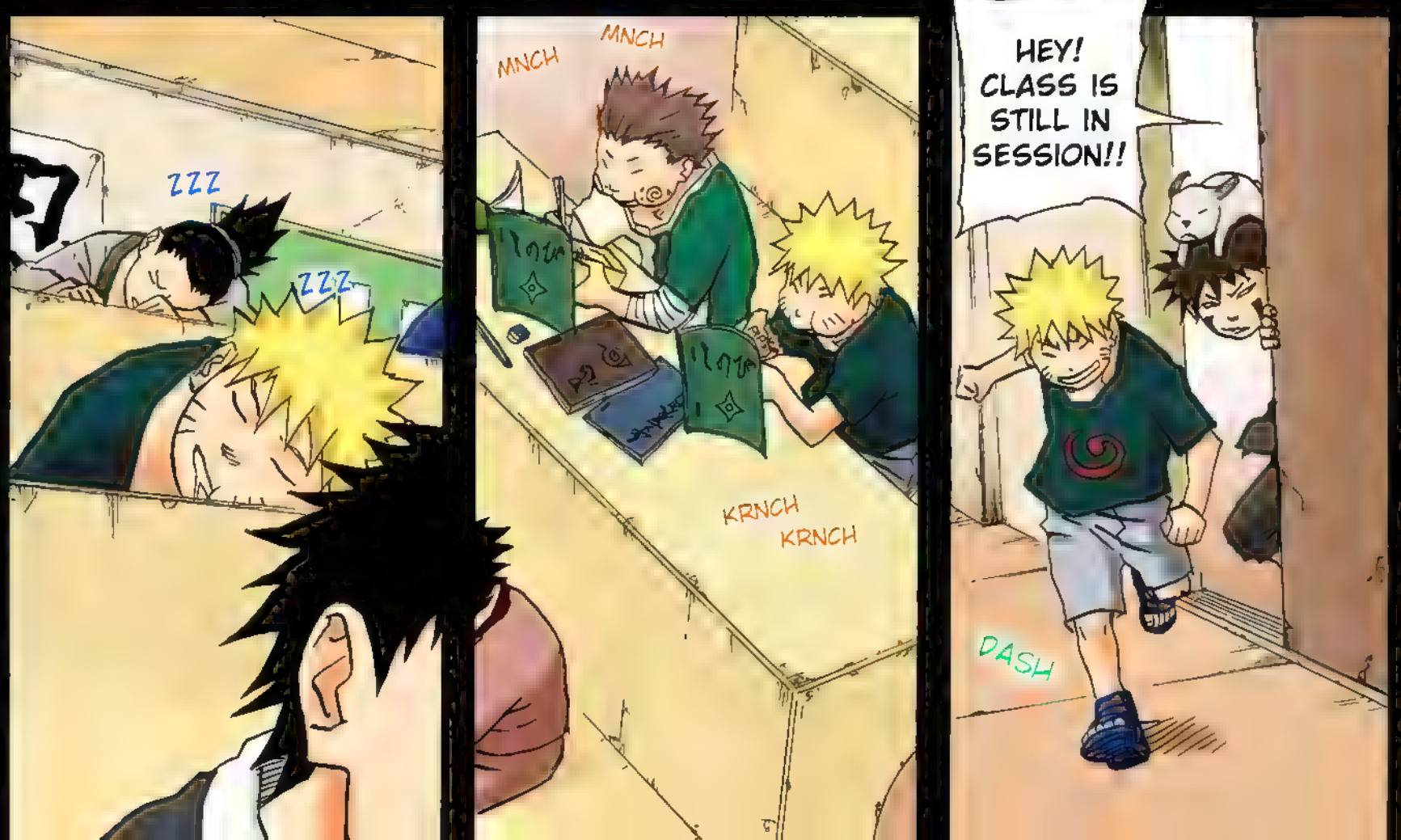
...I'M AT MY LIMIT IT HURTS SO MUCH I CAN'T EVEN BUILD UP ANY CHAKRA!

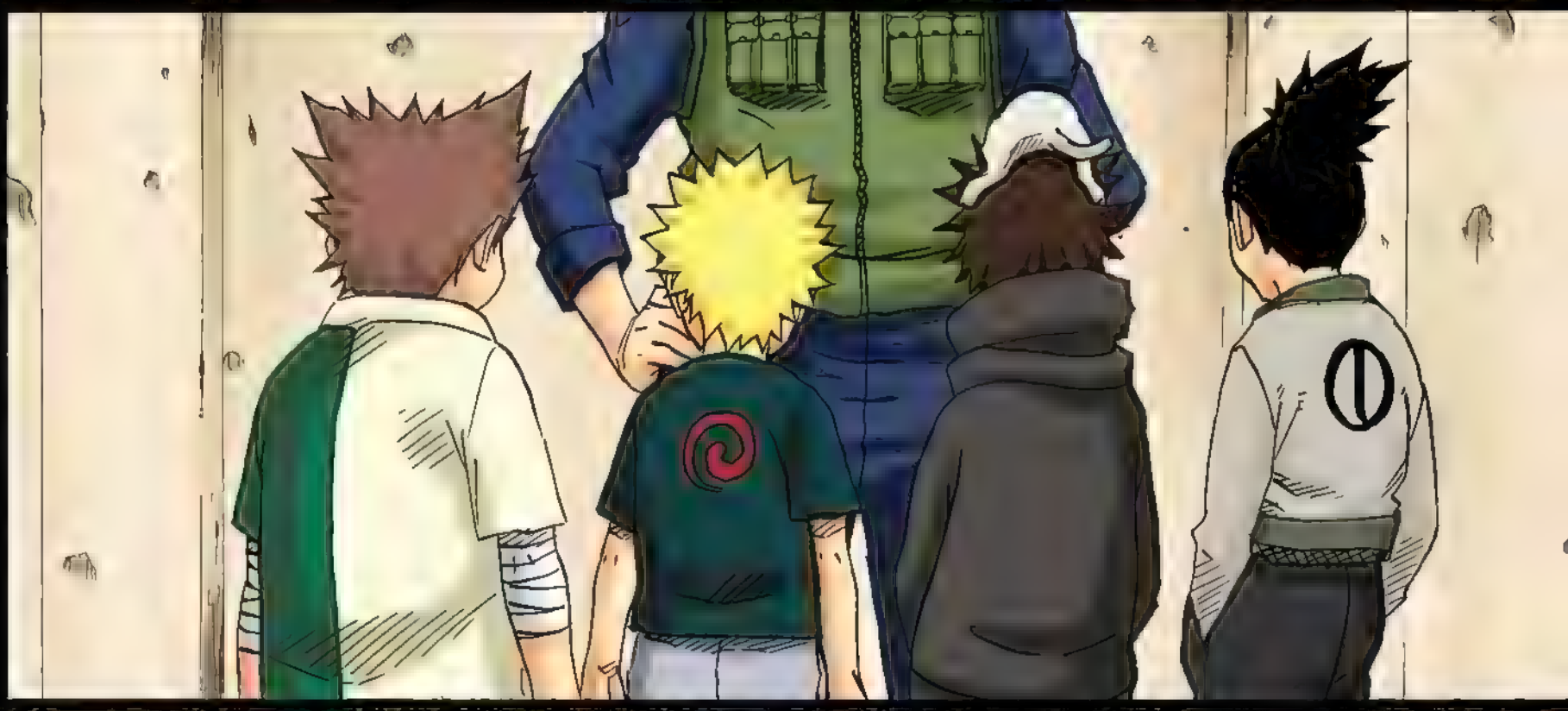
THUDD

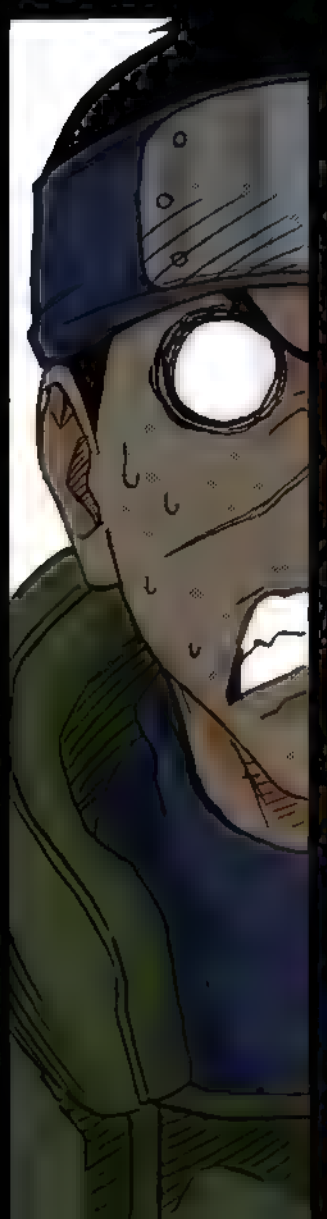
WHEEE

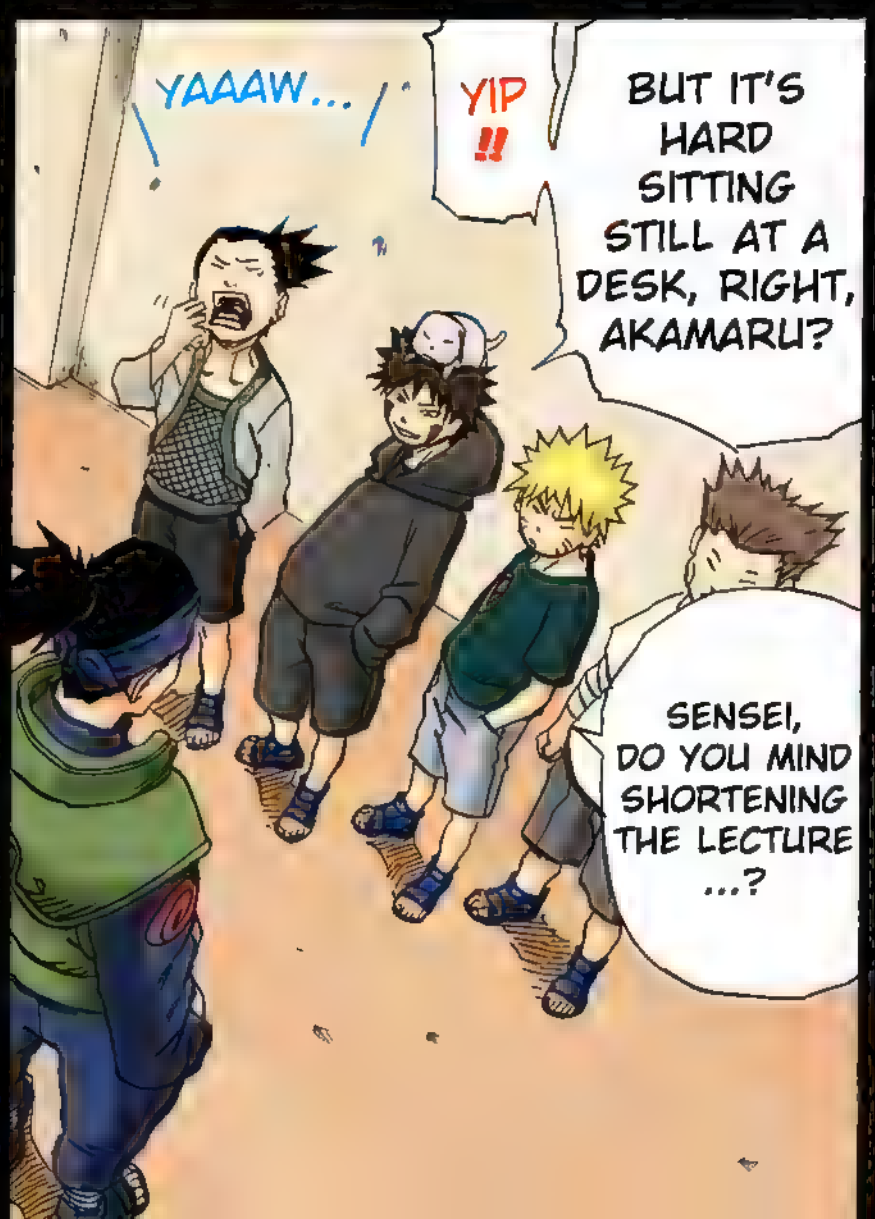

.....
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
TIP
!
HUF
FWP
HUF
HUF


NINJA ACADEMY


ZZZ
ZZZ
MNCH
MNCH
KRNCH
KRNCH
HEY! CLASS IS STILL IN SESSION!!
DASH






YAAAW...
YIP !!
BUT IT'S HARD SITTING STILL AT A DESK, RIGHT, AKAMARU?
SENSEI, DO YOU MIND SHORTENING THE LECTURE ...?

YOU ALL HAVE *ABSOLUTELY ZERO* CONCENTRATION !!
AT THIS RATE, YOU WILL NEVER BECOME UNDERSTANDING NINJA!

WHAT'S THIS?

WHAT ...?!!

FINE, BUT AFTER CLASS, I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU A LESSON IN CONCENTRATION YOU WON'T FORGET!

...IS A FOCUSING EXERCISE THAT OUR KONOHA PREDECESSORS PRACTICED EVERY DAY.

WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN...

HUH.

IT SHOULD PREVENT YOUR MIND FROM WANDERING BY FOCUSING ON A SINGLE POINT, IN THIS CASE, THE TREE LEAF, WHILE YOU BUILD YOUR CHAKRA.

YOU MUST FOCUS ALL OF YOUR ENERGY INTO THE TREE LEAF ON YOUR FOREHEAD.

?

IT'S STRONG NINJA THAT MAKE SPLENDID SHINOBI!

YEAH, RIGHT! YOU'RE MAKING THAT UP!

YEAH! HE'S RIGHT!

SIGH ...

THIS IS WHY WE WEAR THE MARK OF THE LEAF ON OUR HEADBANDS.

ONLY HE WHO CAN CONCENTRATE WILL BECOME A SPLENDID SHINOBI!

.....

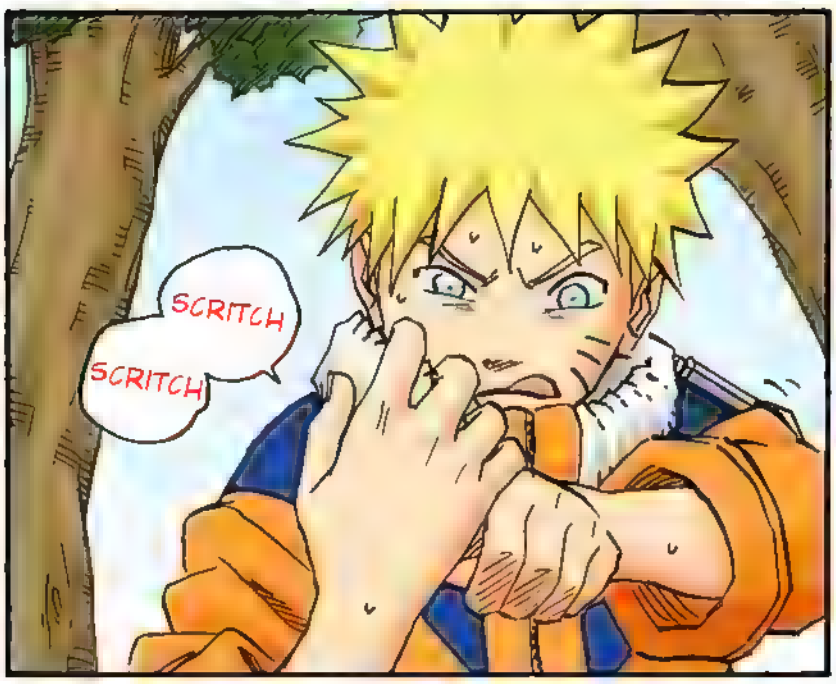
I'M... SO STUPID SOME-TIMES...

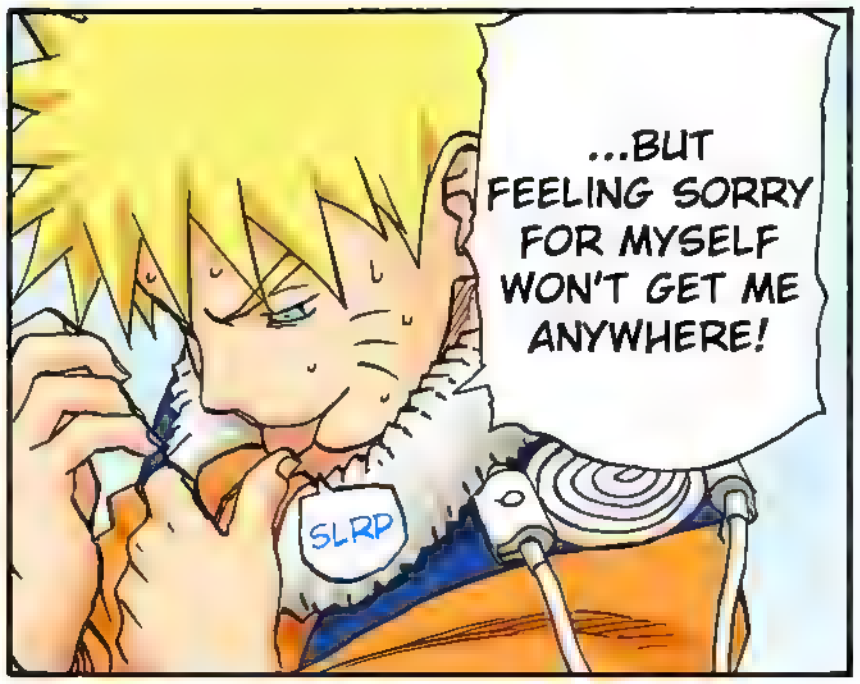
WHUMP

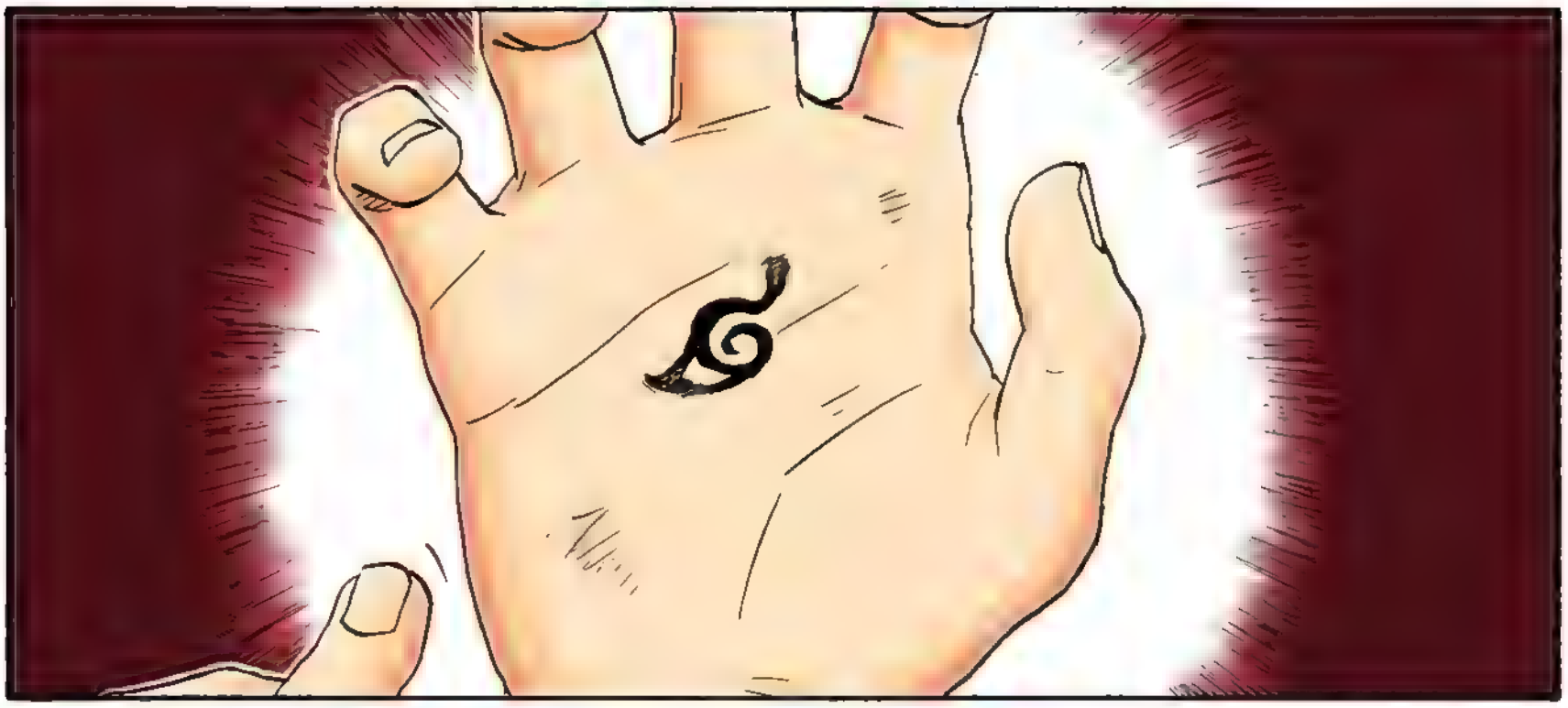
SIGH... I SHOULDA LISTENED MORE CLOSELY TO IRUKA-SENSEI ...

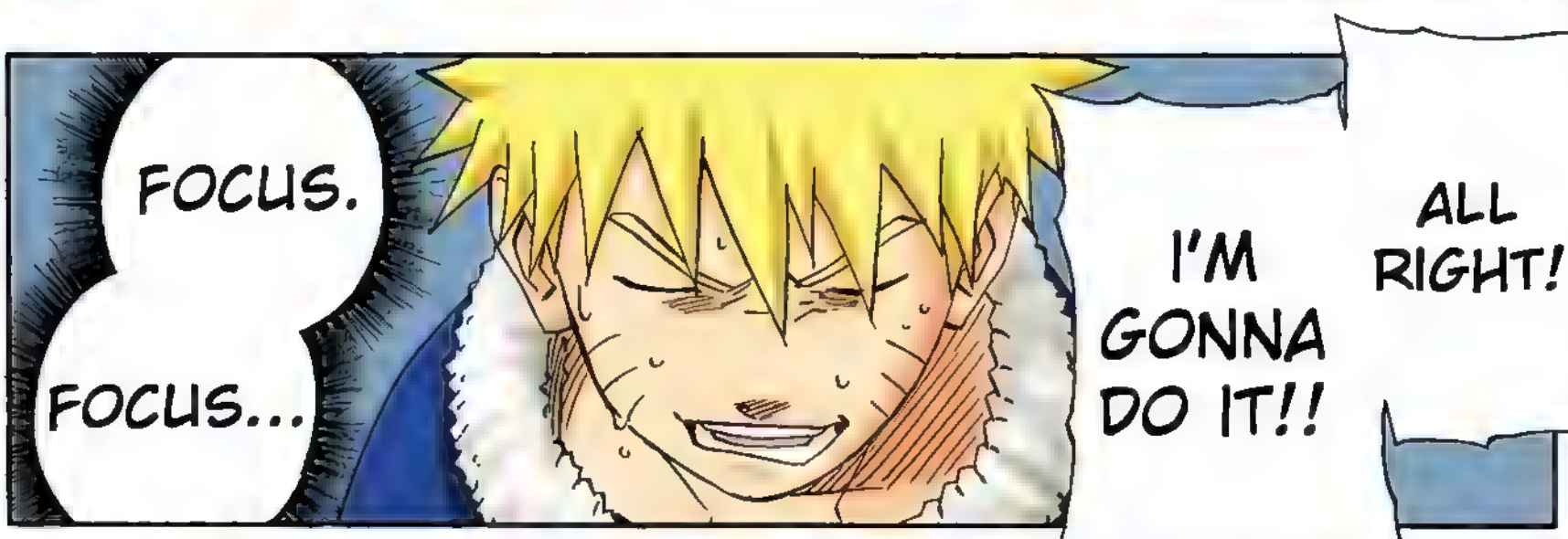
THIS... IS ACTUALLY A LOT LIKE...

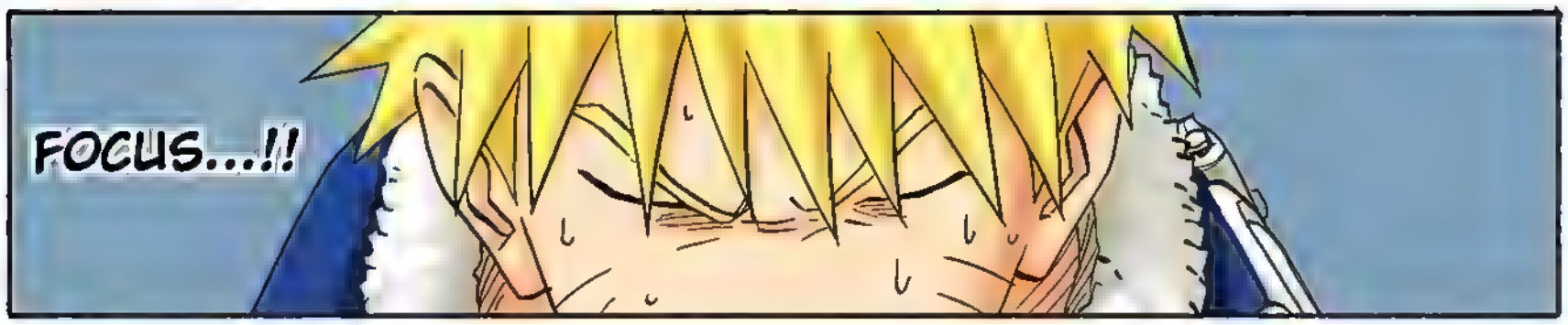
.....

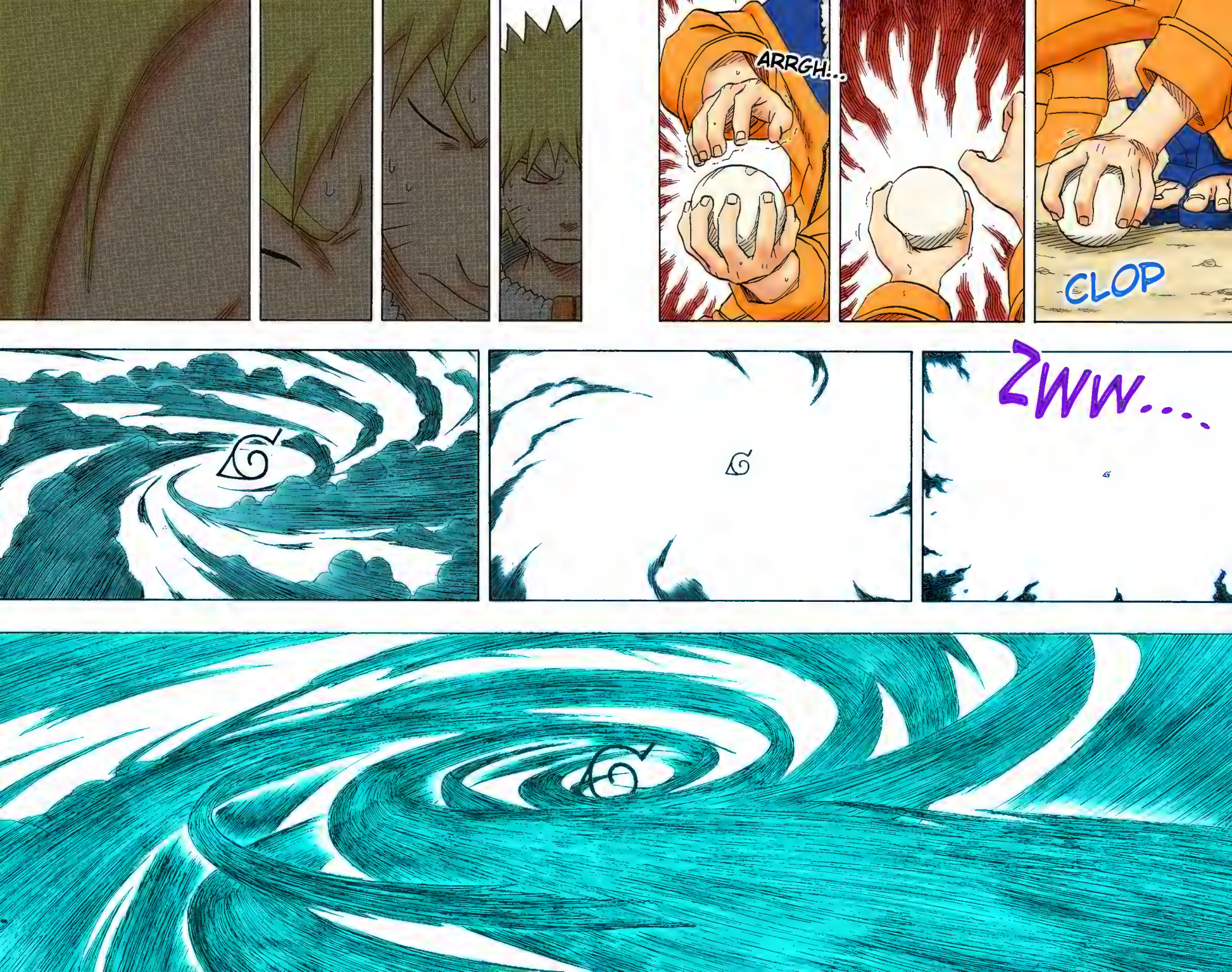

SCRITCH
SCRITCH

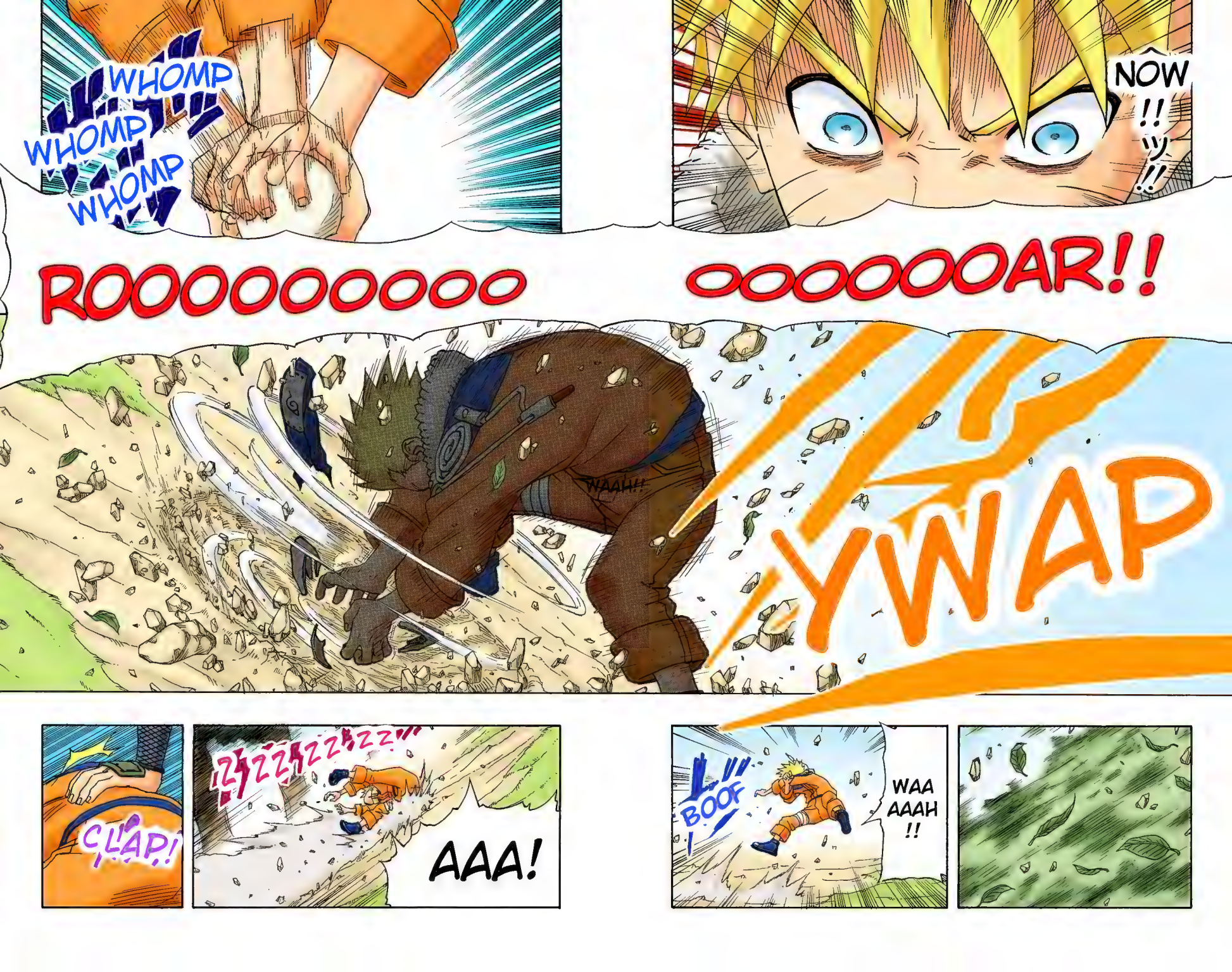

...BUT FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF WON'T GET ME ANYWHERE!
SLRP




FOCUS.
FOCUS...
I'M GONNA DO IT!!
ALL RIGHT!


FOCUS...!!


ARRGH...
CLOP
ZWW....


WHOMP
WHOMP
WHOMP
NOW!!
ROOOOOOOOO
OOOOOOAR!!
WAAH!!
YWAP
CLAP!
ZZZZZZZZZZ!!!
AAA!
BOOF
WAA AAAH!!

HUH, IT SURE LOOKS LIKE YOU CLEARED THE SECOND STATE.

UNH...I BROKE IT...!

ボロ
ボロ

THIS KID MIGHT REALLY HAVE IT...

油

IMPRESSIVE... HE RAISED HIS CHAKRA SO HIGH HE BURNED HIS PALM...

...

I'LL EXPLAIN THE THIRD STATE ON THE WAY.

NOW HOLD YOUR HORSES...

WE'RE GONNA GO MEET TSUNADE FIRST.

HURRY UP...AND SHOW ME THE THIRD STATE...

UNNH...

AWW, WHAT'S THE HURRY? LOOKING IS FREE!

WE HAVE SPENT ENOUGH TIME HERE NOW.

LET'S GET OUT OF THIS PLACE.

WOW. EVEN FROM DOWN HERE, TANZAKU CASTLE LOOKS SPLENDID.

NO WONDER IT'S SO FAMOUS!

KA

BOOM

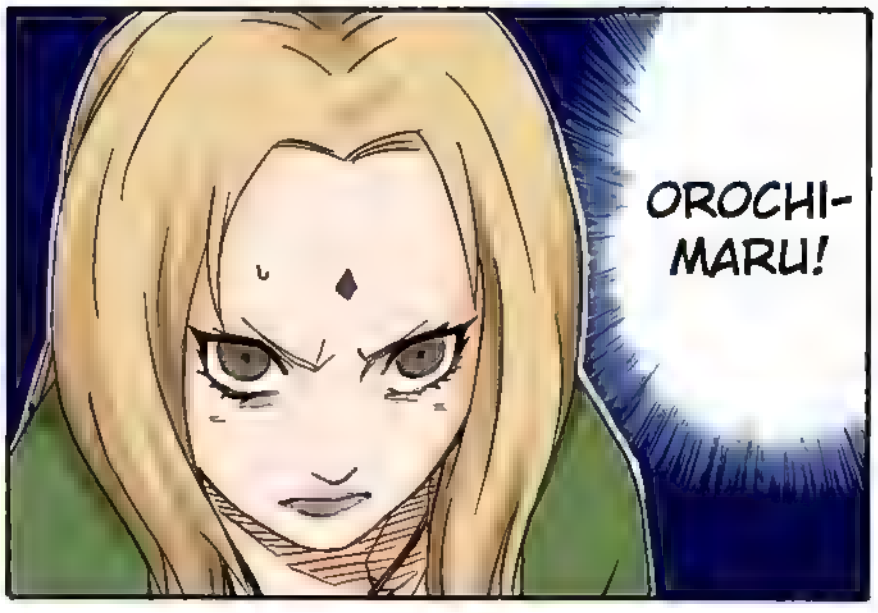
!

!

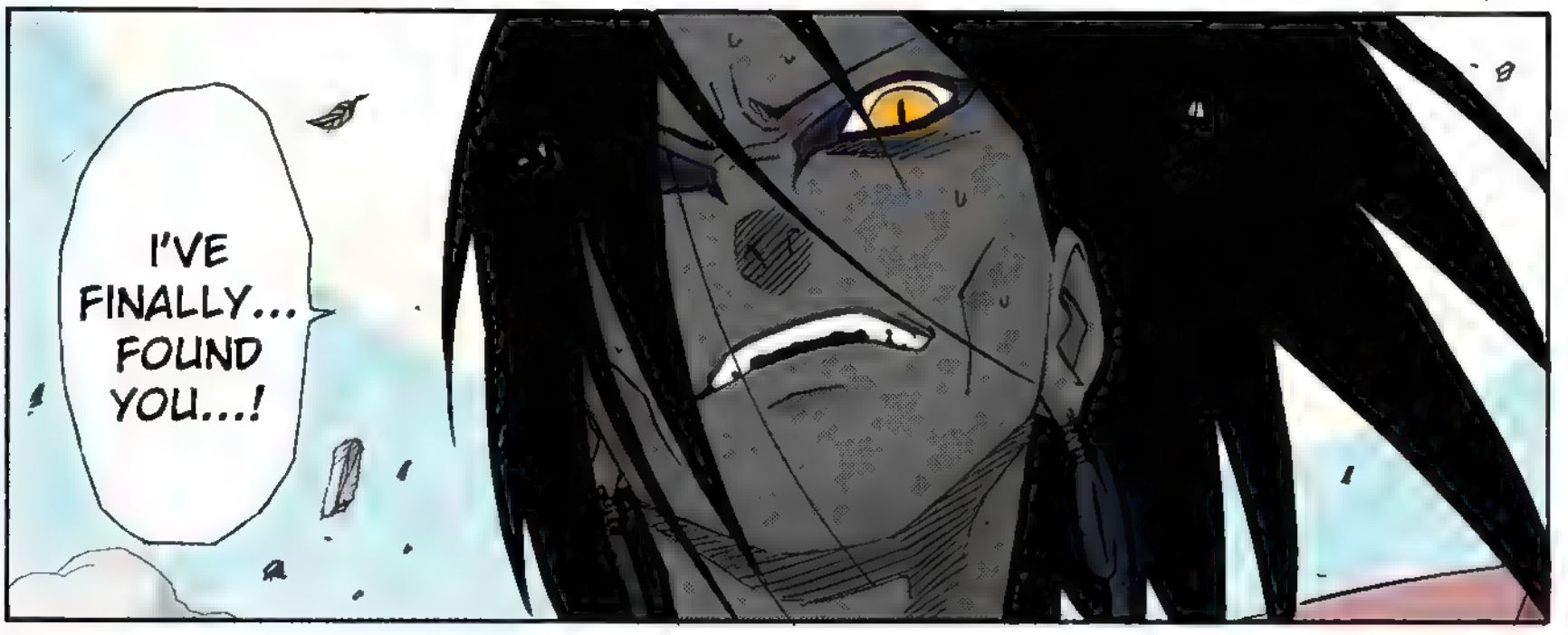
KLAT, KLATTER

KLAT, KLATTER

SST


OROCHI-
MARU!

THAT'S
...!


I'VE
FINALLY...
FOUND
YOU...!

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 27-A

SO I HAD FINALLY WON *WEEKLY SHONEN JUMP'S* NEWCOMER'S AWARD, WHICH HAD BEEN MY DEAREST DESIRE, AND TOOK ONE GIANT LEAP FORWARD TOWARD BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL MANGA ARTIST. I WAS ASSIGNED A PERSONAL EDITOR AND I RECEIVED 200,000 YEN [ABOUT $2,000] IN PRIZE MONEY, SO I WAS FLOATING ON AIR. FIRST, I DECIDED TO PUT ASIDE AND SAVE THE ENTIRE AMOUNT OF THE PRIZE PURSE. AT THE TIME, I WAS THE PROVERBIAL STARVING STUDENT ARTIST WHO HAD SO LITTLE MONEY THAT I WOULD SQUEEZE OUT AND USE EVERY LAST DROP OF PAINT IN THE TUBE.

IN PARTICULAR, MY FAVORITE COBALT BLUE OIL PAINT... THAT SURE WAS EXPENSIVE! IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, EACH TUBE COST ABOUT 2,000 YEN [ABOUT $20]...

BECAUSE THE SUPER-FRUGAL ME WOULD MAKE THE COBALT BLUE GO FURTHER BY THINNING IT WITH ADDITIONAL OIL, THERE STARTED TO BE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN COLOR DENSITY BETWEEN MY PAINTINGS AND THOSE OF MY BOURGEOIS CLASSMATES WHO JUST SLATHERED IT ON. IT GOT TO A POINT WHERE MY ART INSTRUCTOR WOULD REGULARLY SCOLD ME, *"TOO LIGHT!"* OR *"YOU NEED TO GIVE IT A HEAVIER, MORE OPPRESSIVE FEELING, YATTA YATTA."* ON TOP OF IT ALL, HE'D SAY, *"ARE YOU SLACKING?"* OR *"YOU OUGHT TO TAKE MORE TIME WITH IT, AND USE MANY MORE COLORS. YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH COLORS!"* THAT INSTRUCTOR DEFINITELY DIDN'T TAKE HIS STUDENTS' WALLET CONTENTS INTO CONSIDERATION...

I WANTED TO SHOUT BACK, I CAN'T HELP IT IF I CAN'T AFFORD MORE PAINT TUBES! BUT ACTUALLY, AT THAT POINT I DIDN'T REALLY CARE ANYMORE...THAT'S BECAUSE THE CONSTANTLY MONEY-GOBBLING OIL PAINTING BUSINESS HAD LOST ITS APPEAL, AND I WAS ALSO TIRED OF THE WHINING, HIGH-NOSED ART WORLD. I'D RATHER SPEND WHAT PRECIOUS MONEY I HAD ON THE MOVIES, WHICH MIGHT HELP ME DRAW MANGA... AND THUS, I DECIDED TO SPEND ALL MY MONEY ON MOVIES AND VIDEOS.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ナンバー

155：THE THIRD STEP

油

ALRIGHT, LET'S GO!

.....

HUH...?

YOU SEEM TO BE IN A BAD MOOD...

...STOP ACTING LIKE A LITTLE KID. LET'S JUST GO ALREADY.

YOU CAN PRACTICE THE THIRD STEP EVEN AS WE'RE WALKING.

HE HE HE...

SRCH SRCH

REALLY?!

HUH?!

WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR TRAINING!

BECAUSE! BECAUSE!

JAB

SO FAR, WE'VE ONLY GOTTEN THROUGH TWO OF THEM!

YOU SAID THERE WERE THREE STAGES TO THIS THING, RIGHT!

(SFX: PWUUUU)

POK

!

PONK

HERE.

A BALLOON?

!?

CLAP

HUH?

WHAT'S THIS...? LOOKS LIKE AN ORDINARY BALLOON.

ポヨン

(SFX: BOINN)

...AND THE SECOND HAD REQUIRED POWER.

THE FIRST STAGE WAS ROTATION...

MMM

FINALLY, THIS IS THE THIRD STEP!

PFFT

.....

.....

WAIT A SEC! WHAT AM I EVEN SUPPOSED TO BE SEEING?!

.....

HE HE HE...

AT FIRST GLANCE, IT MAY *LOOK* LIKE I'M JUST HOLDING THE BALLOON IN MY HAND...

BUT LET ME SHOW YOU THE SAME THING ON MY LEFT HAND TO SEE WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON!

LET'S SEE WHAT'S GOING ON...

INSIDE THIS ORDINARY, LITTLE BALLOON!

BONG

!

シュルルル

...WHOA! HIS CHAKRA IS SWIRLING FASTER AND FASTER...!

YET IT'S STAYING IN A CIRCLE... IT'S まるのまんま LIKE...

...A MINI-CYCLONE!

WOW...

ゴクリ

...INSIDE THE BALLOON IN YOUR RIGHT HAND?

...AND THE SAME THING'S GOING ON...

YUP!

...IN THE THIRD STATE, YOU PUT OUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED SO FAR FULL FORCE, AND THEN...

SO YOU SEE...

...EVEN THOUGH THE CHAKRA'S MORE POWERFUL AND ROTATING FASTER THAN WHEN HE BURST THE RUBBER BALL!

HE'S TURNING SO MUCHC CHAKRA, BUT THE BALLOON DOESN'T EVEN MOVE...

に時より

もに量の

...CONTAIN IT!

...BUT, YOU FORM A LAYER ON THE INSIDE OF THE BALLOON...

...AND FOCUS ON COMPRESSING THE CHAKRA INSIDE.

IN SHORT, THAT MEANS YOU MAXIMIZE THE ROTATION AND POWER OF YOUR CHAKRA...

.....

HEH HEH...!

EXACTLY! YOU ARE CATCHING ON QUICK THIS TIME!

SO WHAT I DO IS KEEP THE SAME SPINNING I HAD IN THE SECOND STEP...

...AND INSTEAD OF POPPING THE BALLOON, I NEED TO FOCUS ON NOT BURSTING IT!

I GET IT NOW!

WELL, THIS IS WHY...

TWRL

WATCH CLOSELY...! UP TO STAGE TWO, WE CAN DO THIS!

PLOP

SO WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW HOW TO DO THAT?!

HMM ...

HMPH!

SHF

SWRRRRL

FLASH

HAH!!

!
SWRRRRR!
AND NOW, WHEN YOU'VE MASTERED THE THIRD STAGE...!
PFFT
...WHOA!
SHF
GA
KK

(SFX: PSSST)

FASTER ROTATIONS AND COMPRESSED CHAKRA MEAN THAT IT WILL BE THAT MUCH MORE POWERFUL!

BY KEEPING THIS MINI CYCLONE IN YOUR PALM, IT WILL STAY IN SHAPE...

.....!

ALL RIGHT! I KNOW THAT I CAN DO THIS...!

.....

WHOMP
WHOMP
WHOMP
... NOW !!
THIS IS LOOKING GOOD...
(SFX: WHOO)
NOW JUST CONTAIN IT!!
CONTAIN IT...
(SFX: TWITCH TWITCH)

POP

NO WONDER... IT TAKES THREE STAGES...

YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME... I DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF CONTROL OVER MY CHAKRA...

YOU'VE GOT TO CONTAIN ALL OF YOUR SPIN AND POWER!

NO HOLDING BACK, NARUTO!

...THAT'S AN A-RANK, SUPER ADVANCED NINJUTSU FOR YA...

I TOLD YOU THAT THIS WAS GOING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT...

THIS IS ON A TOTALLY DIFFERENT LEVEL THAN THE OTHER TWO...!

WE'RE GONNA PRACTICE IT WHILE WE'RE WALKING.

NOW, NO MORE SHOP TALK.

.....

HEY ...!!

THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT TSUNADE'S GONNA STICK AROUND THAT TOWN.

CRUNCH

WHIRL

HEY... WHAT'S YOUR HURRY? CAN'T WE SLOW DOWN JUST A LITTLE...?

.....

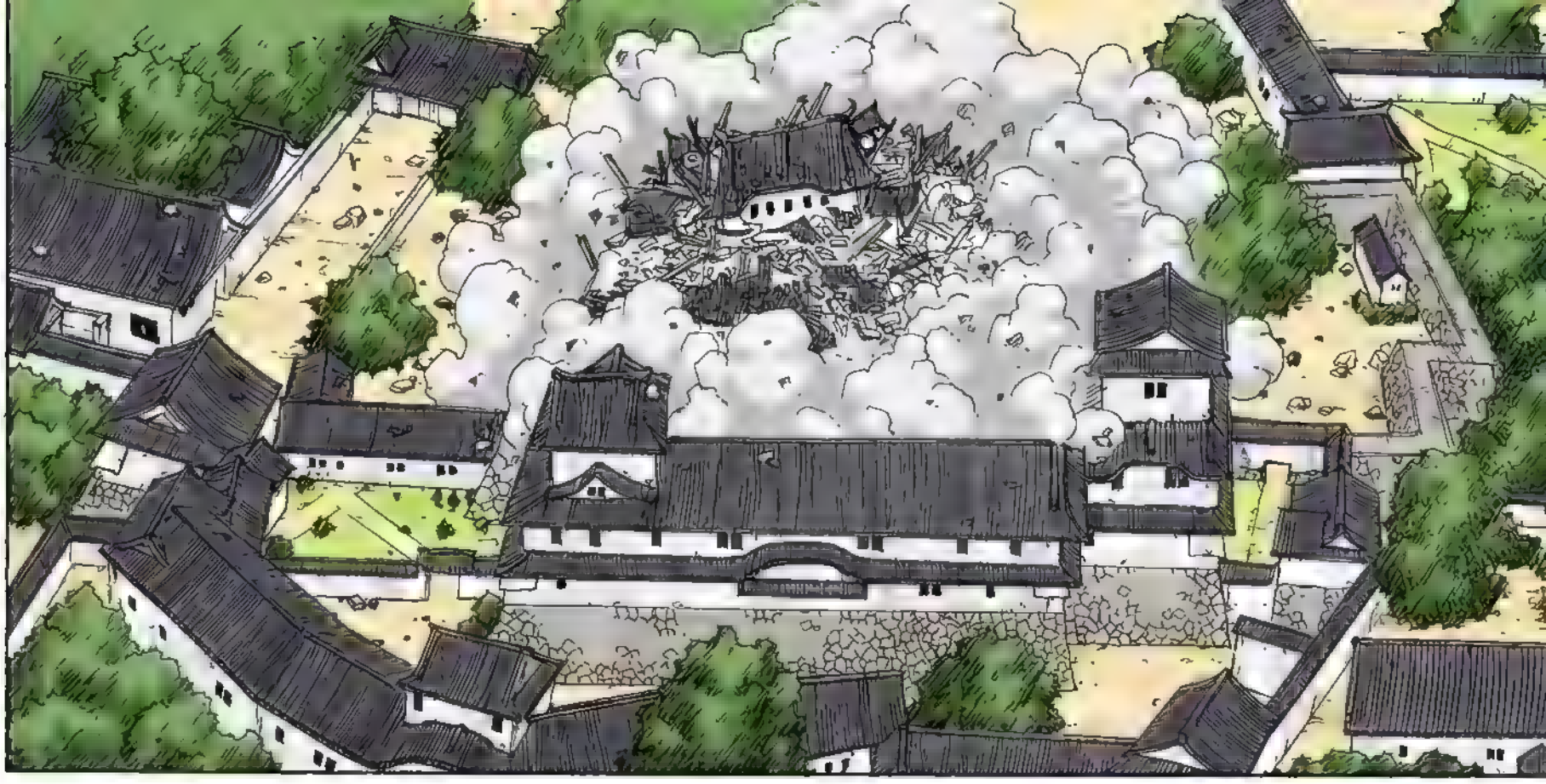
WE'VE ALREADY SPENT AN ENTIRE DAY WAITING FOR YOU TO RECOVER.

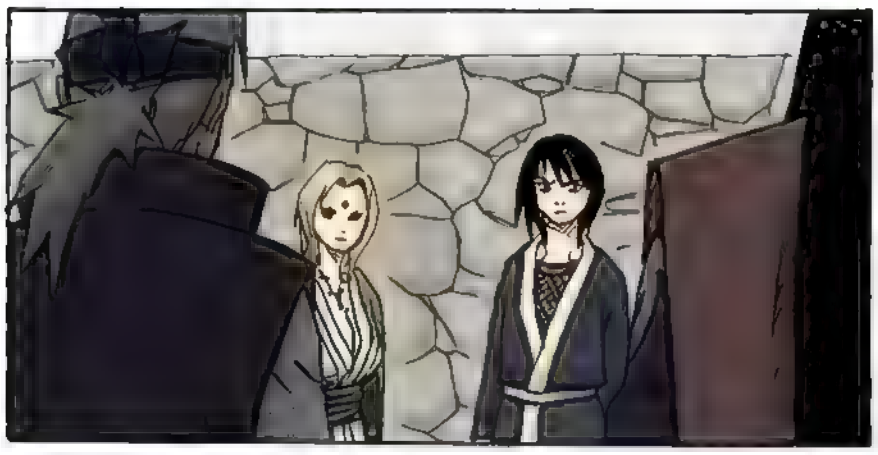
AW, ALL RIGHT...

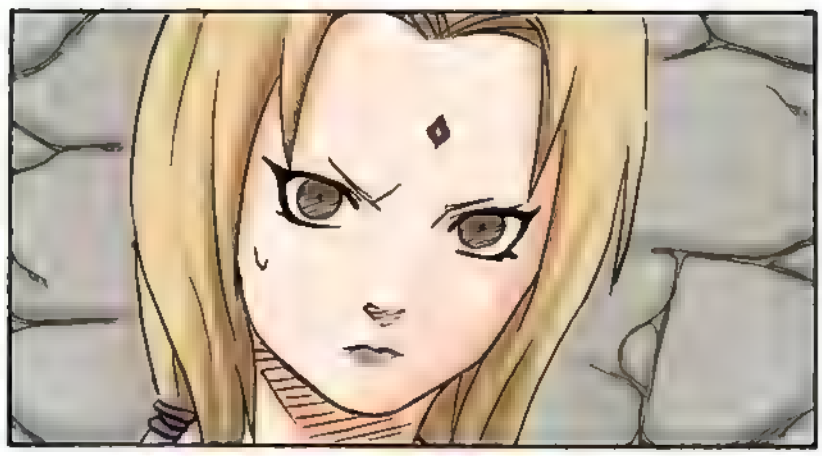
.....

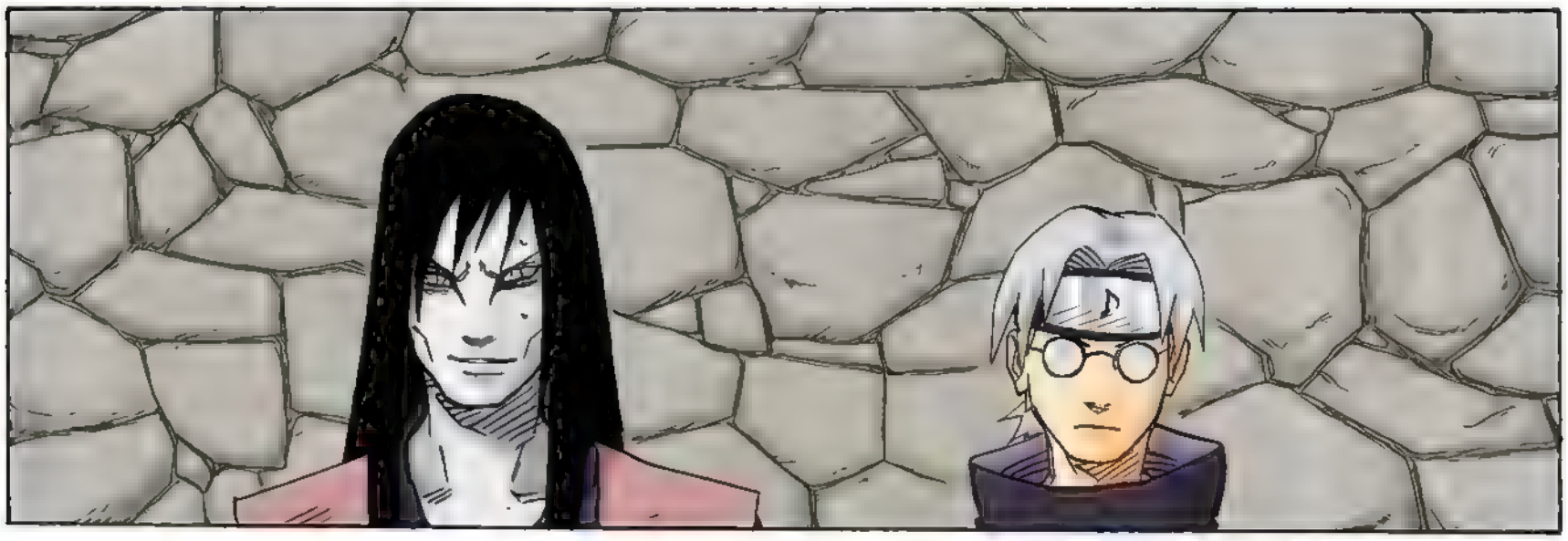
LET'S GO!

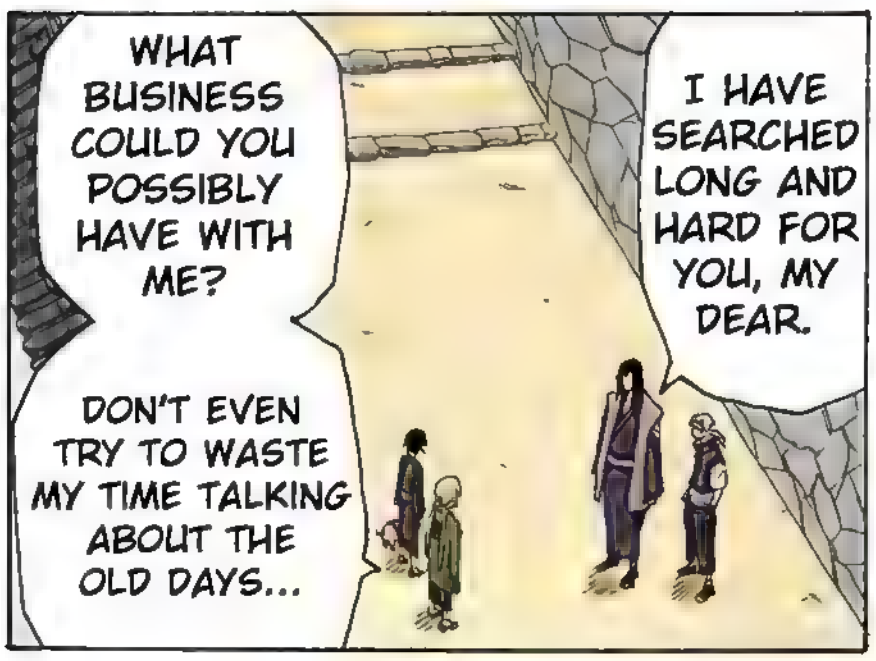
IT'S NOT LIKE AN OLD FRIEND'S SOMEHOW GONNA SHOW UP AND CHIT-CHAT ABOUT THE OLD DAYS...

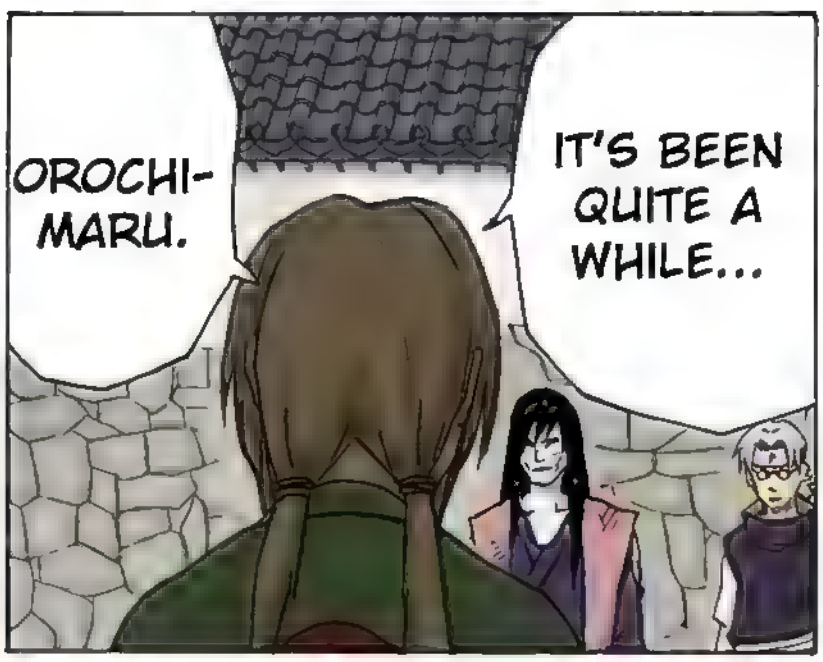









WHAT BUSINESS COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE WITH ME?
DON'T EVEN TRY TO WASTE MY TIME TALKING ABOUT THE OLD DAYS...
I HAVE SEARCHED LONG AND HARD FOR YOU, MY DEAR.


OROCHI-MARU.
IT'S BEEN QUITE A WHILE...

TWITCH TWITCH

ACTUALLY, I HAVE A SMALL FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU...

...AN ERRATIC HEART RATE... BASED ON HIS COMPLEXION, HE'S RUNNING A FEVER AND MUST HAVE HAD A LONG PERIOD OF EXHAUSTION... AND HIS ARMS...

.....

I QUIT BEING A MEDIC A LONG TIME AGO.

GO ASK SOMEONE ELSE.

LADY TSUNADE... I'M SURE YOU HAVE ALREADY FIGURED IT OUT...

...CAN BE CURED BY NONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF.

BUT WE CANNOT... YOU MUST TRY TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE WOUNDS OF THESE ARMS...

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE ALIVE WHO CAN CURE THE WOUNDS OF THESE ARMS...

...AND AS ONE OF THE LEGENDARY THREE SHINOBI...

FOR YOUR SPECIALISM IN THE ART OF MEDICINE, YOU GAINED FAME...

.....

...THOSE ARMS... THOSE ARE NO ORDINARY INJURIES...

SOME KIND OF CURSE MARK OR SOMETHING...

JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, OROCHIMARU?

OH, NOTHING REALLY...

IT WAS JUST A MINOR ACCIDENT FROM WHEN I HAD KILLED LORD THIRD...

!!

!!

HEH HEH... NO NEED TO MAKE A SCARY FACE LIKE THAT, NOW...

YOU... DID WHAT...?

YOU SHOULD KNOW...

THE SAME THING GOES FOR PEOPLE...

SURELY YOU MUST KNOW BY NOW... THAT ALL THINGS MUST EVENTUALLY COME TO AN END...

...YOU LOVED MOST IN THE WORLD DIE...!

GRRR

FOR YOU LET THE TWO PEOPLE...

...A MINI-CYCLONE!

WOW...

ゴクリ

...INSIDE THE BALLOON IN YOUR RIGHT HAND?

YUP!

...AND THE SAME THING'S GOING ON...

...IN THE THIRD STATE, YOU PUT OUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED SO FAR FULL FORCE, AND THEN...

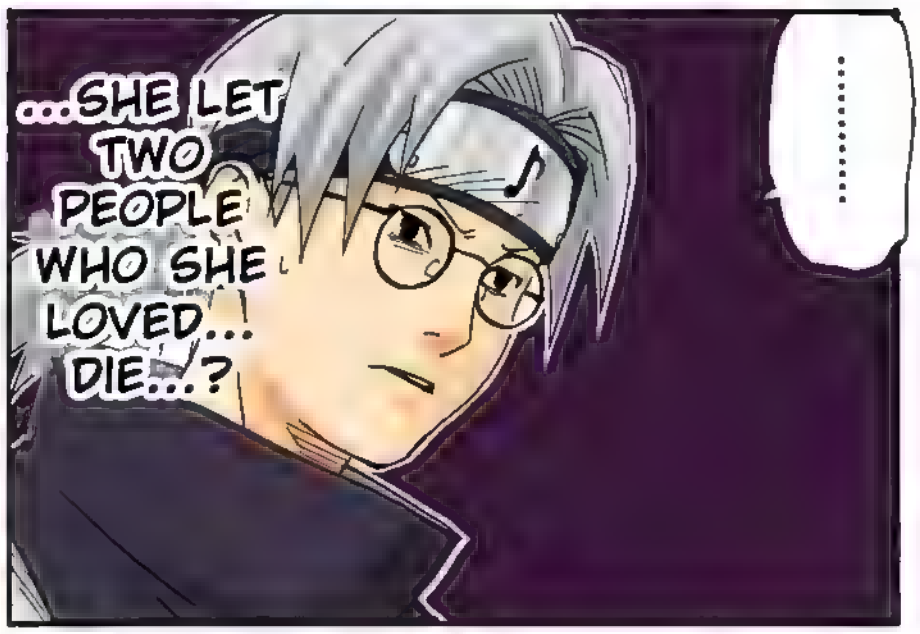
SO YOU SEE...

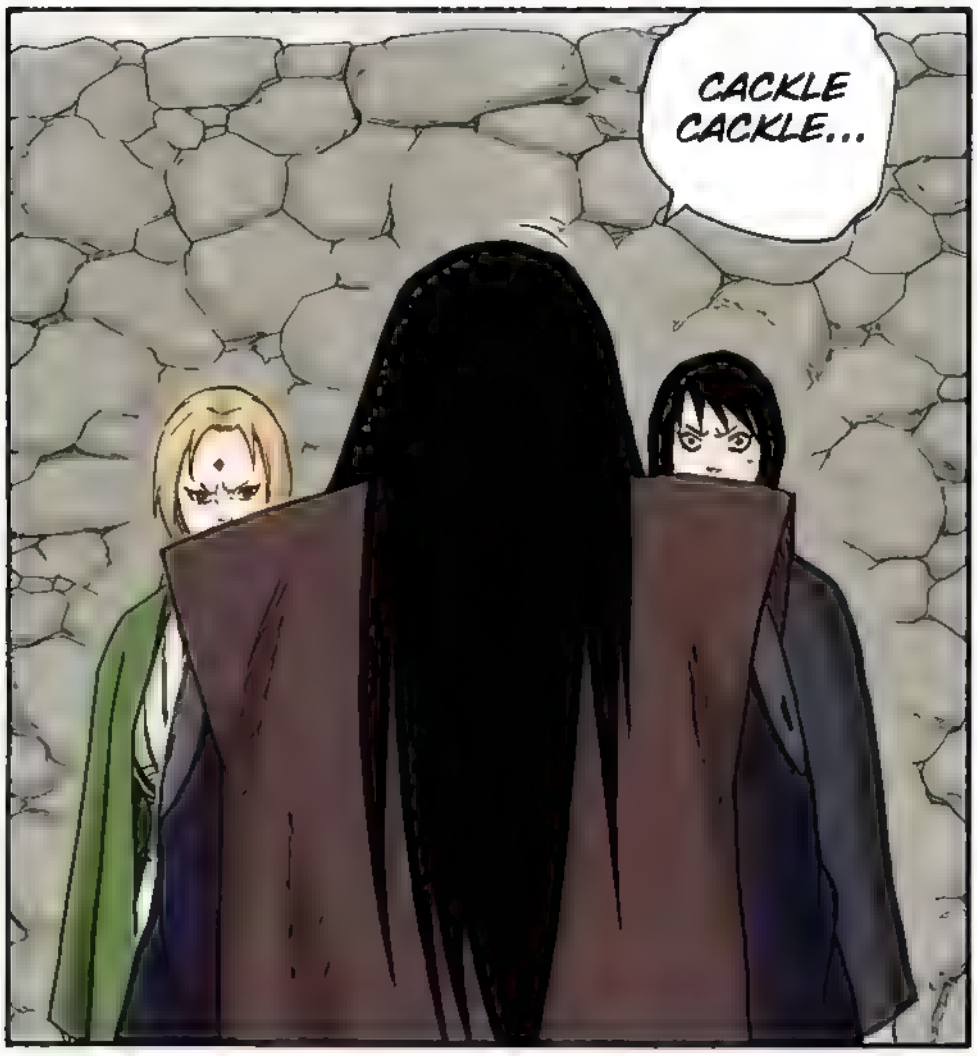
...EVEN THOUGH THE CHAKRA'S MORE POWERFUL AND ROTATING FASTER THAN WHEN HE BURST THE RUBBER BALL

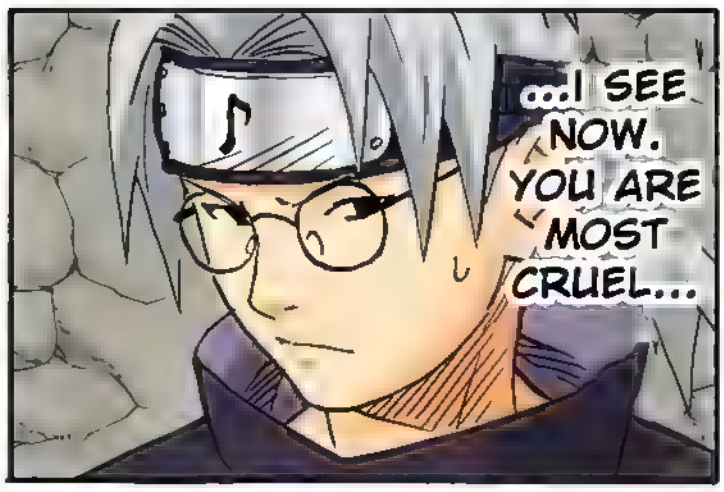
HE'S TURNING SO MUCH CHAKRA, BUT THE BALLOON DOESN'T EVEN MOVE...!

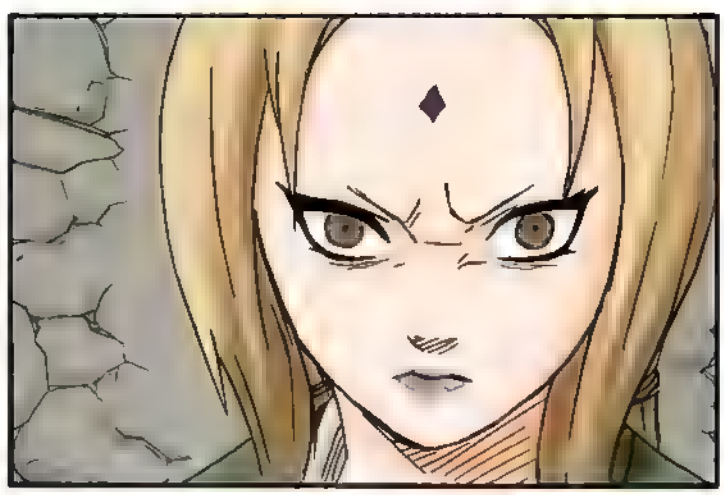
ナンバー

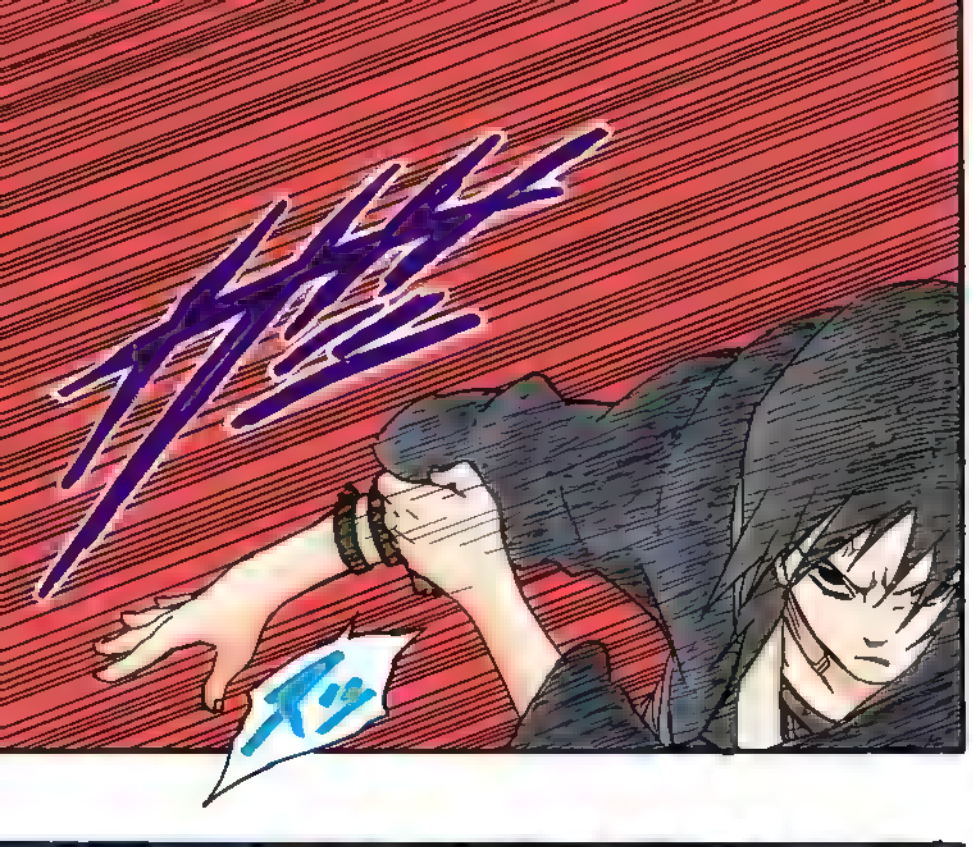
156 : THE OFFER

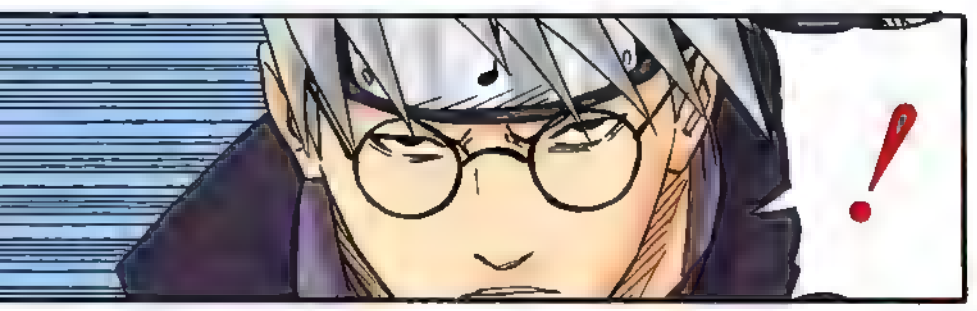

...SHE LET TWO PEOPLE WHO SHE LOVED... DIE...?
.....

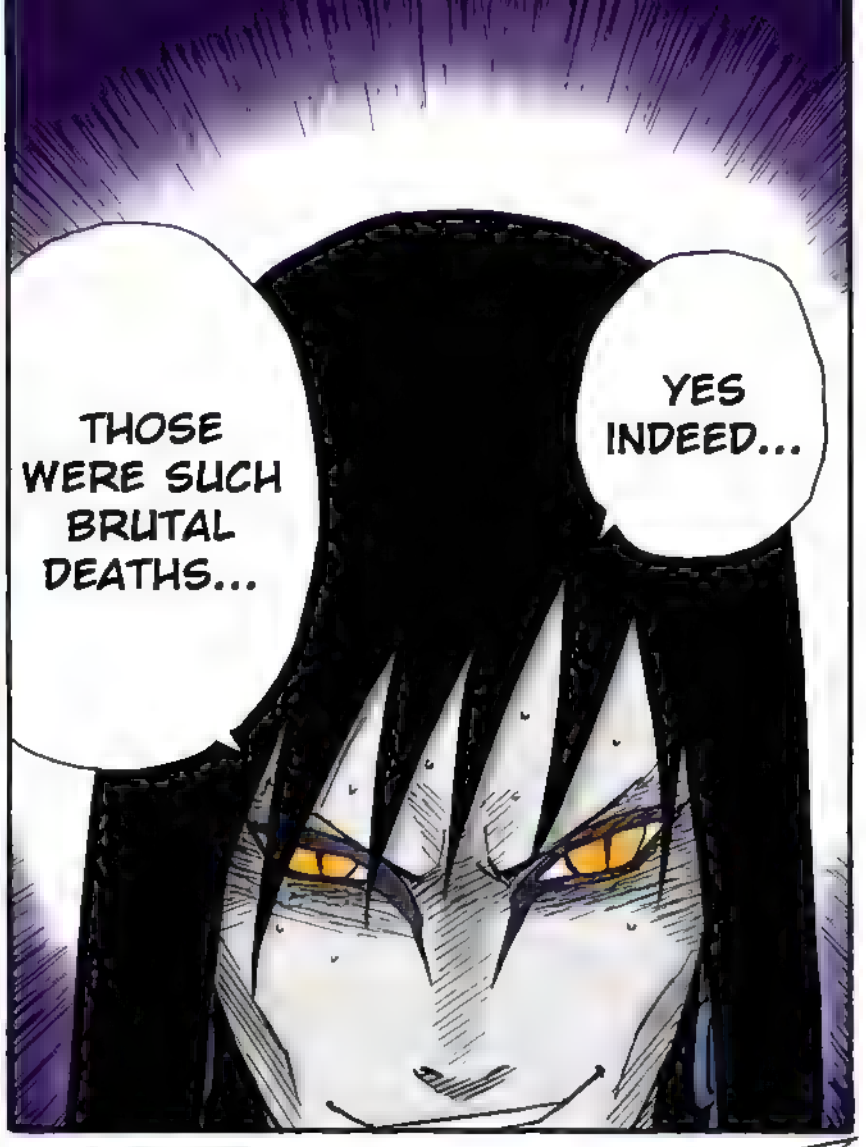

CACKLE CACKLE...

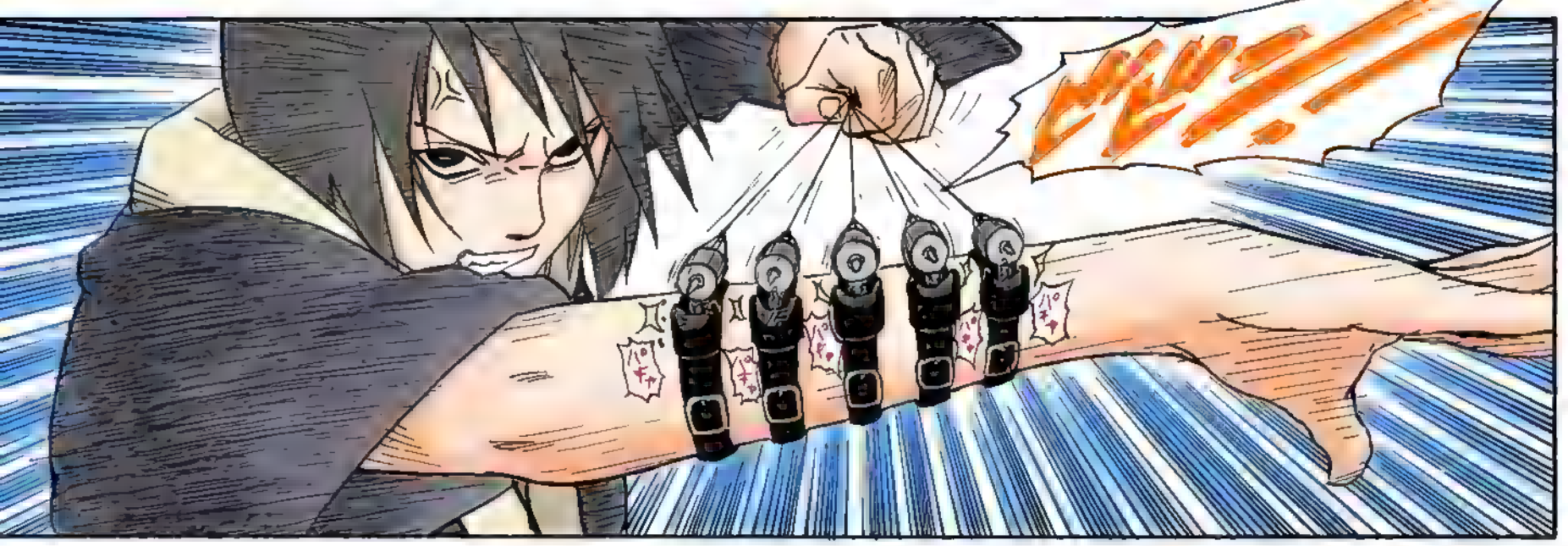

...I SEE NOW. YOU ARE MOST CRUEL...








YES INDEED...
THOSE WERE SUCH BRUTAL DEATHS...



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...POISON... THESE NEEDLES ARE LACED...
STAND DOWN, SHIZUNE.
賭

HER COMPANION... SHE'S GOOD...

SIGH...

HUF HUF

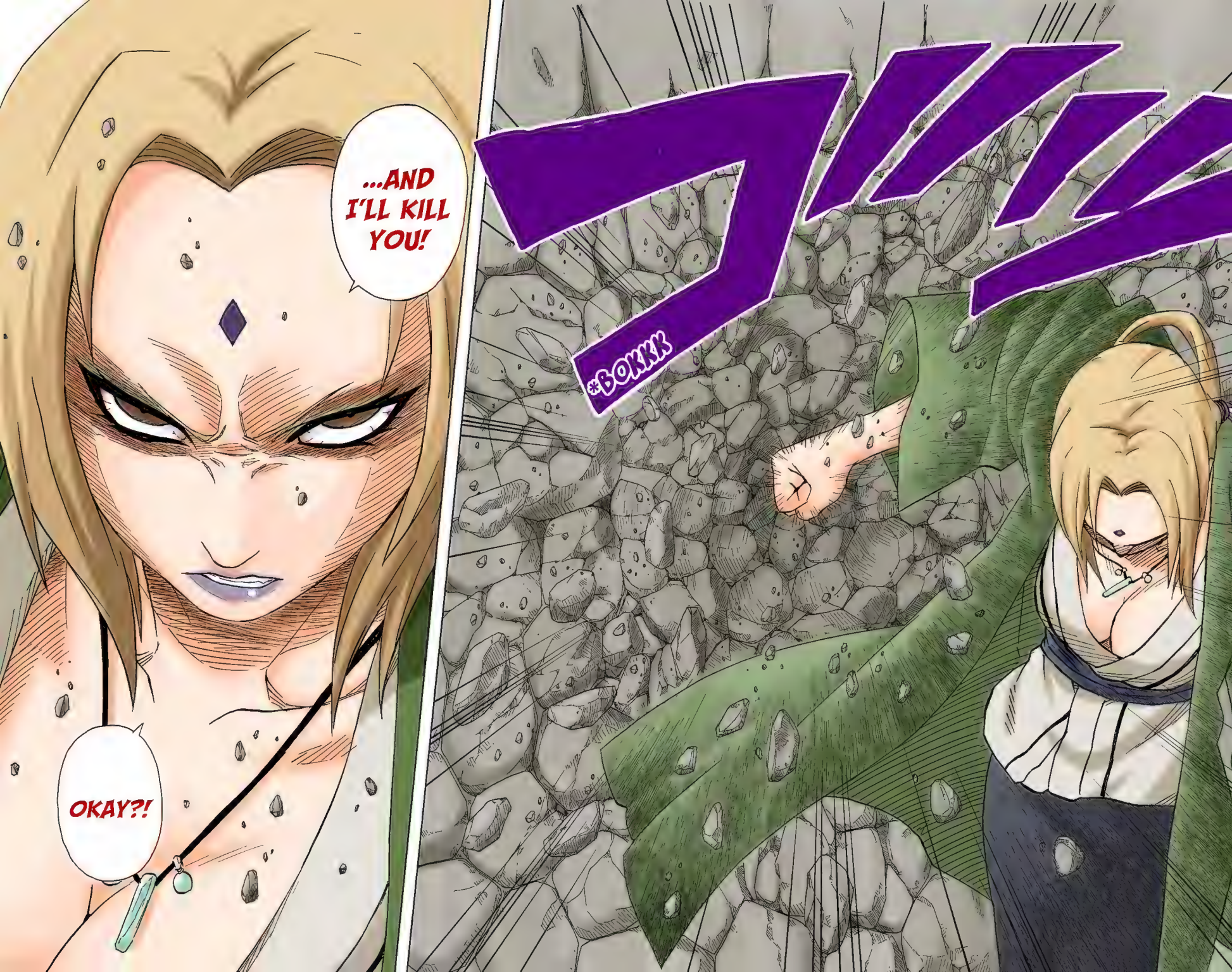
...YOU ALWAYS WERE A CREEP...

OROCHIMARU...

YOU MOCK ME...

BUT YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT...

!?


...AND I'LL KILL YOU!
OKAY?!
*BOKKK

AND... SCARY...

I BET SHE'S SINGLE... I'D PUT MONEY ON IT..

.....

...SHE'S STRONG...!

WAAH!

SIGN: TANZAKU TOWN

WE WOULD MERELY LIKE TO STRIKE A DEAL WITH YOU.

WE DID NOT COME HERE TO FIGHT YOU..

SO I HOPE SHE'S STILL AROUND...

TSUNADE'S IMPATIENT AND SHORT-TEMPERED...

ｳﾜｧ.!

WON'T YOU CONSIDER... OUR OFFER?

WE'RE NOT ASKING YOU TO DO IT FOR FREE.

OR ELSE I'LL ERASE YOU.

I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A COUNT OF FIVE...

GET LOST BEFORE I FINISH!

GET LOST!

I THOUGHT I JUST TOLD YOU.

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HEAL LORD OROCHIMARU'S ARMS.

4

5

I REALLY DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE DISAPPOINTED BY THE TERMS...

PLEASE CALM DOWN...

1

2

.....

3

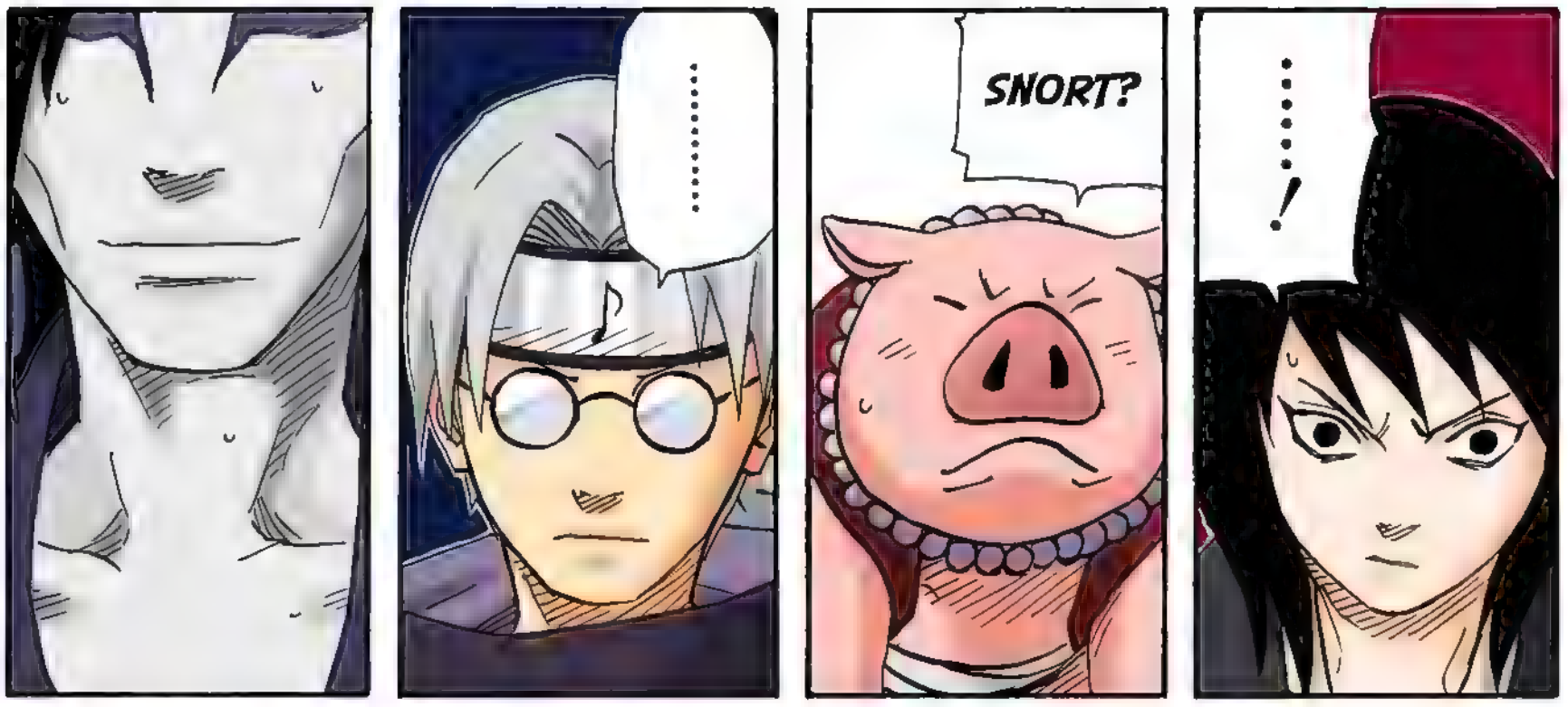
SIGH...

...I CAN REANIMATE YOUR BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER AND YOUR LOVER BOTH...

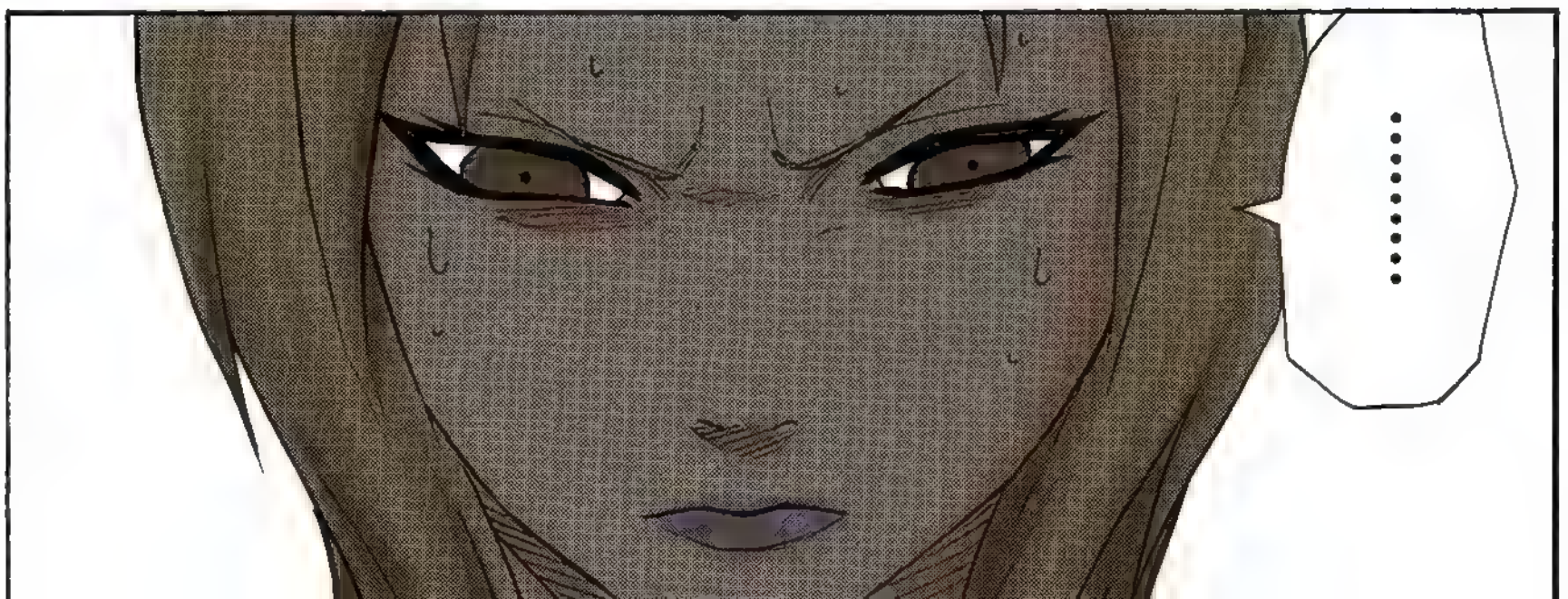
I'VE LEARNED THE FORBIDDEN JUTSU..

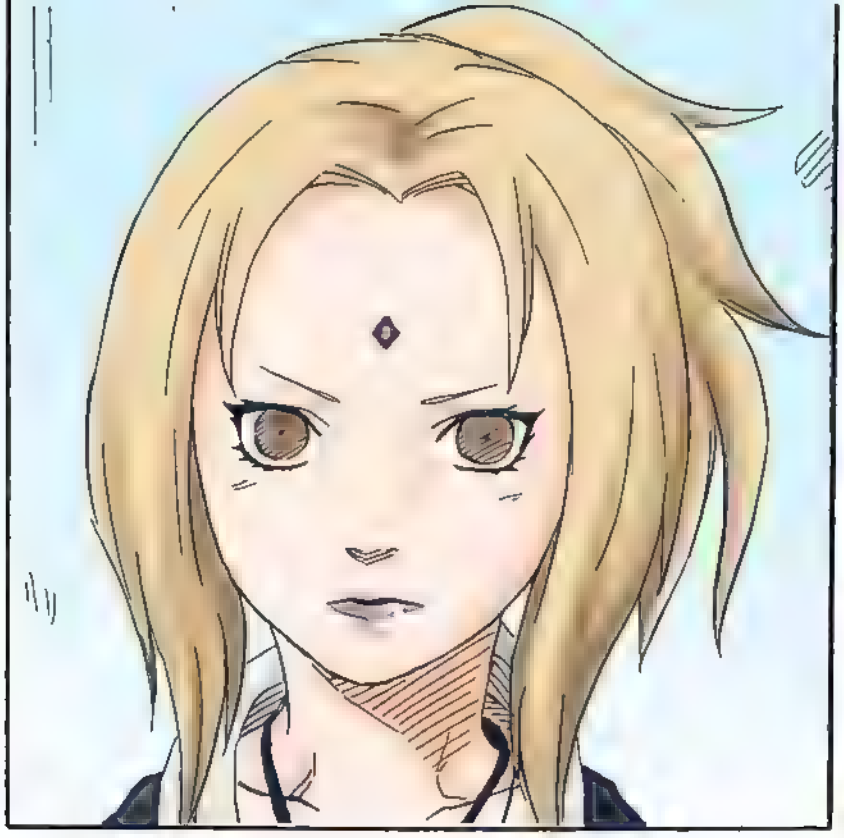
ピクッ

……！


SNORT?
!

...MEAN OUR OFFER IS ACCEPTABLE?
DOES THE FACT THAT WE'RE STILL STANDING HERE WHOLE AND HALE...





THERE? WHERE'S THERE?

I BELIEVE SHE SAID SHE WAS HEADING THERE...

TO TRY TO WIN BACK THE MONEY SHE LOST HERE.

AAH...!

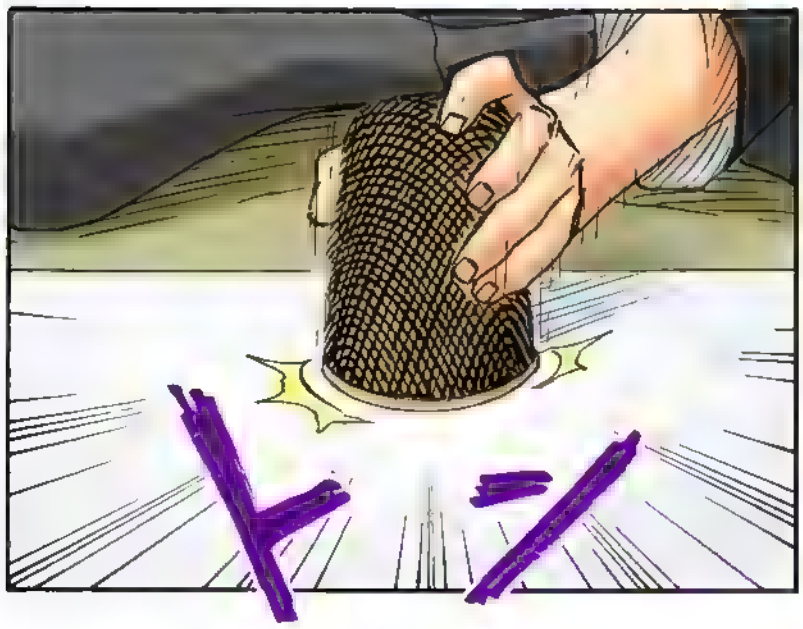
I THINK I KNOW THAT LADY...

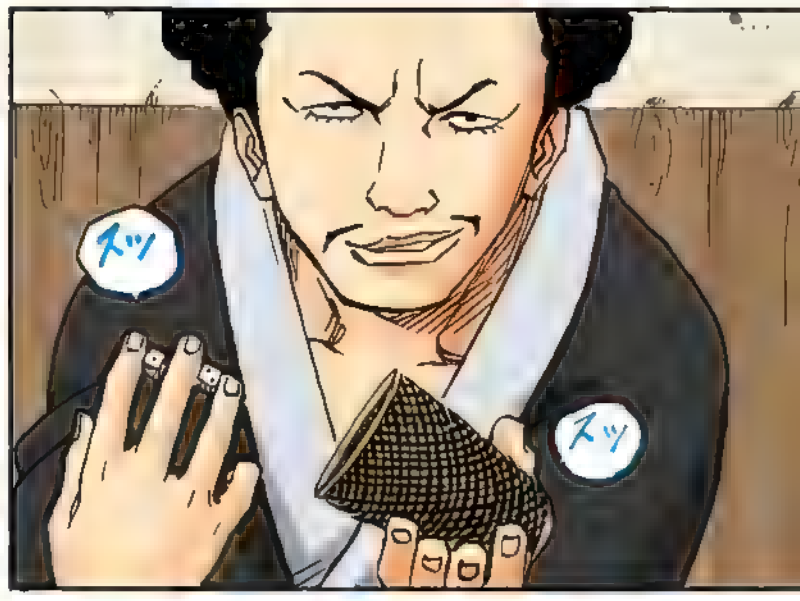
SHUT UP! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY HERE?! LEAVE ME ALONE!

IF YOU ADD THE PIPS ON THE DICE AND GET AN EVEN NUMBER, THAT'S CHO.

IF YOU GET AN ODD NUMBER, THAT'S HAN.

LOOKIE HERE, BOY.





IF YOU WIN, I WON'T CHARGE YOU FOR THE INFORMATION... BUT IF YOU LOSE, IT'LL COST YOU 1,000 RYO'. HOW'S THAT?

HEY, THERE'S NO FREE ANYTHING AT A GAMBLING HOUSE. LET'S MAKE A DEAL.

(1,000 RYO IS ROUGHLY 10,000 YEN, OR $100.)

HMM...

SURE!

WELL THEN, PICK CHO OR HAN.

LET'S SEE...

...ALL RIGHT!

"ゴクッ"

.....

WHICH MEANS HAN SHALL WIN IT FOR ME...

SO... HERE WE GO!

SINCE I JUST TURNED 50...

HOW ABOUT...

...CHO!

SH... SHOOT...! 2+5=7, HAN!

!

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!

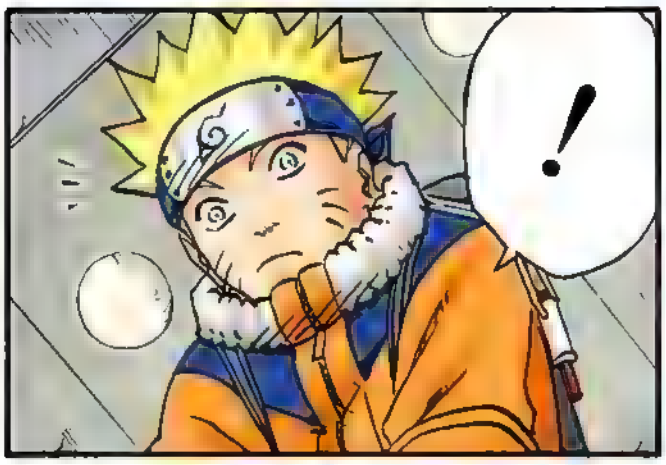
WAH!

HO HO...IT LOOKS LIKE I WON!

NICE, NARUTO!!

OH!

DARN! FOILED AGAIN!


!

SHEESH, SHE AIN'T HERE!
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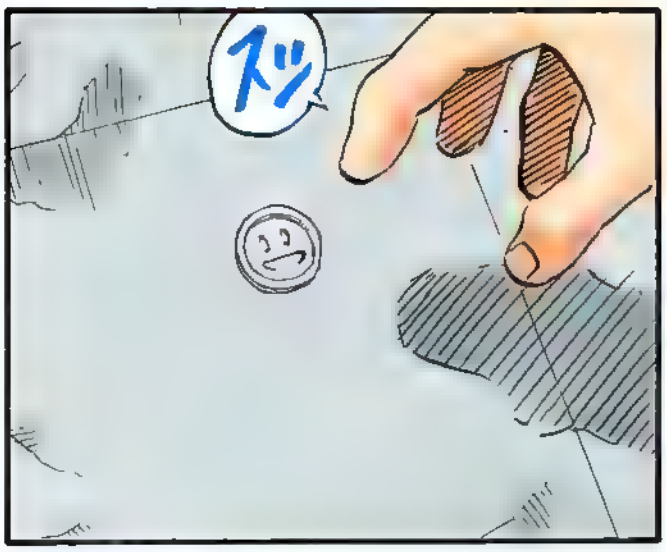
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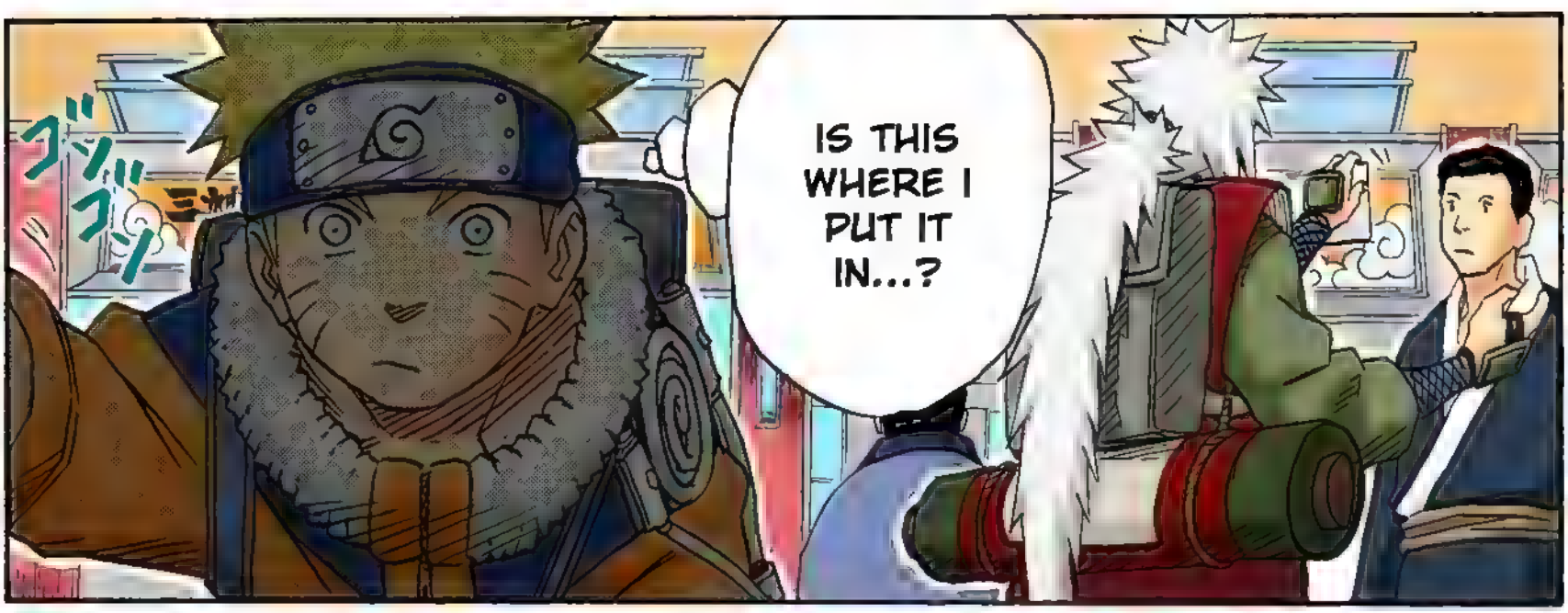
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IS THIS WHERE I PUT IT IN...?

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なるとさいふ
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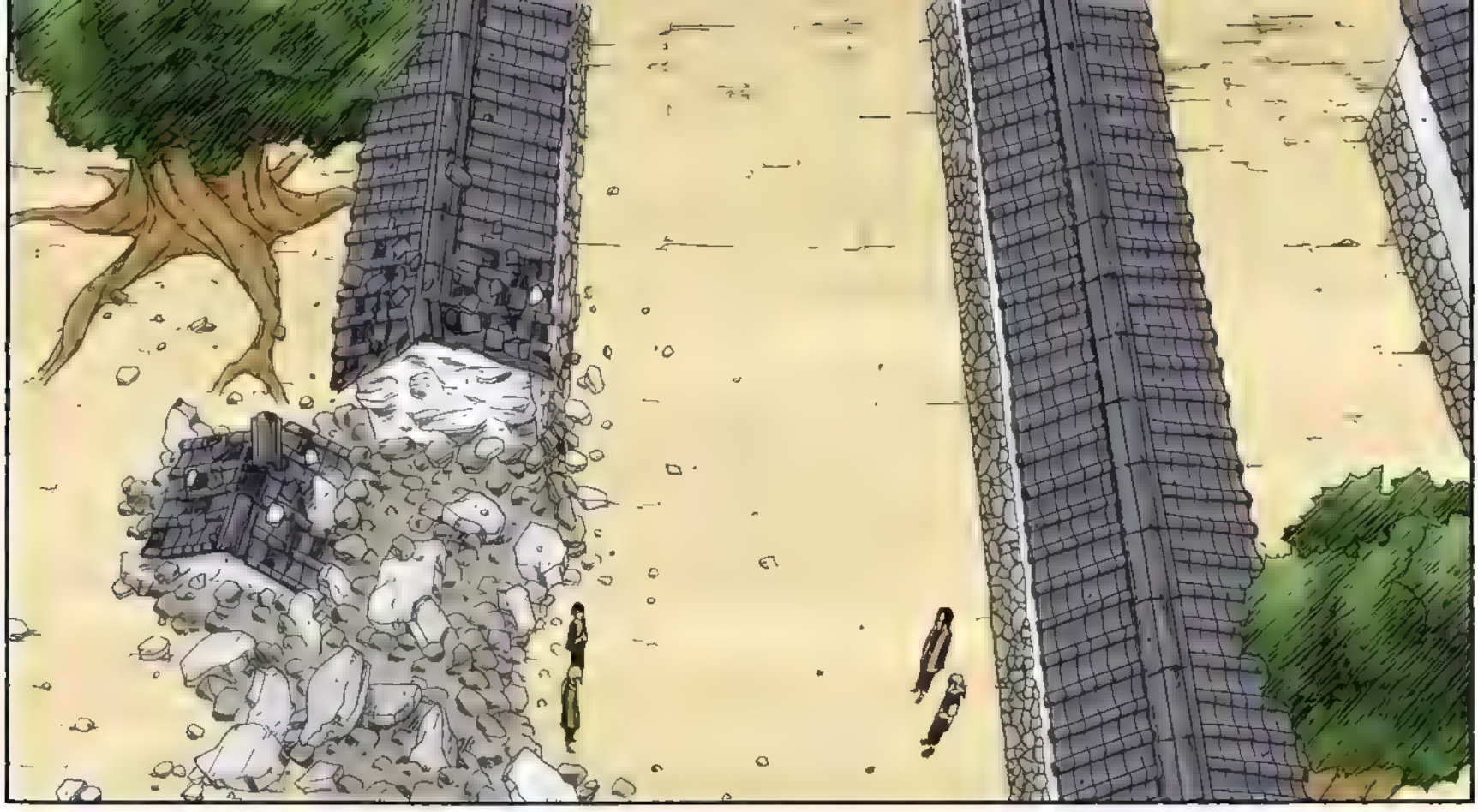
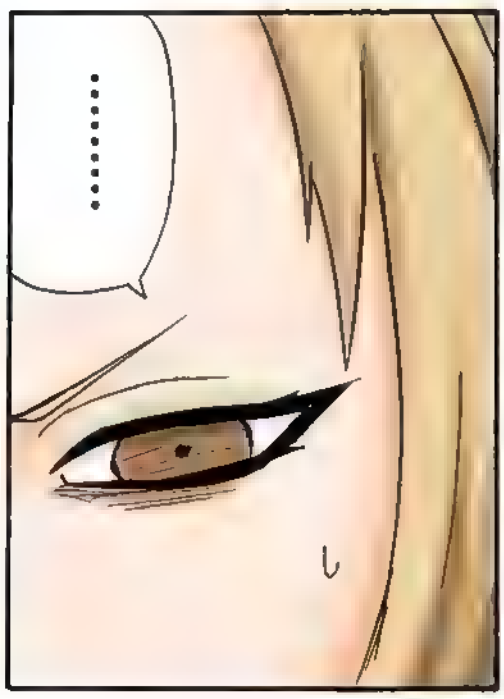
SHE COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN TOO FAR, NOT IN THIS SHORT A TIME...
...WHERE'D THAT TSUNADE TAKE HERSELF...?
...BUT MORE IMPORTANT...

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE GOT THAT FAR WITH JUST ONE COIN!
.....
YOU ARE SO MUCH CUTER WHEN YOU'RE FULL.
スリスリ
ルンルン
HE'S GOT GOOD GAMBLING INSTINCTS...
術の才能はいまいちのくせして!

OKIE DOKIE!
THIS WAY!
LET'S GO, NARUTO.

IF I REMEMBER RIGHT, THIS IS A CASTLE TOWN...WE CAN GET UP THERE AND...
...WELL, IT CAN'T BE HELPED... WE'LL HAVE TO GO SOMEWHERE HIGH UP AND LOOK FOR HER THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY...
ズン

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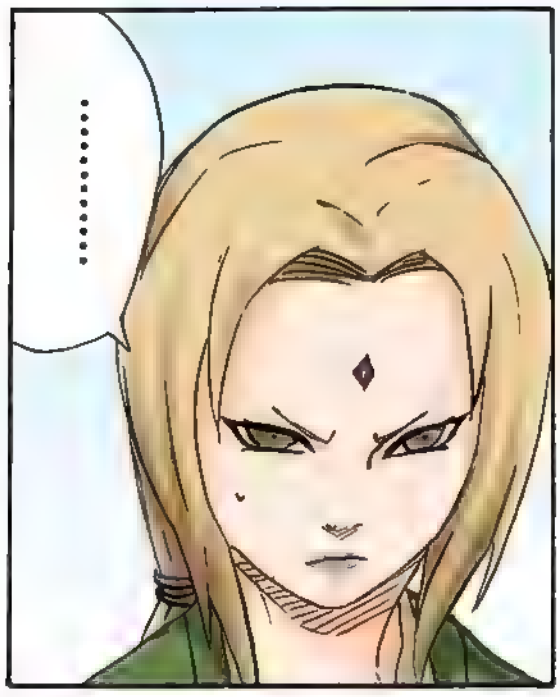
DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE THEM AGAIN, TSUNADE...?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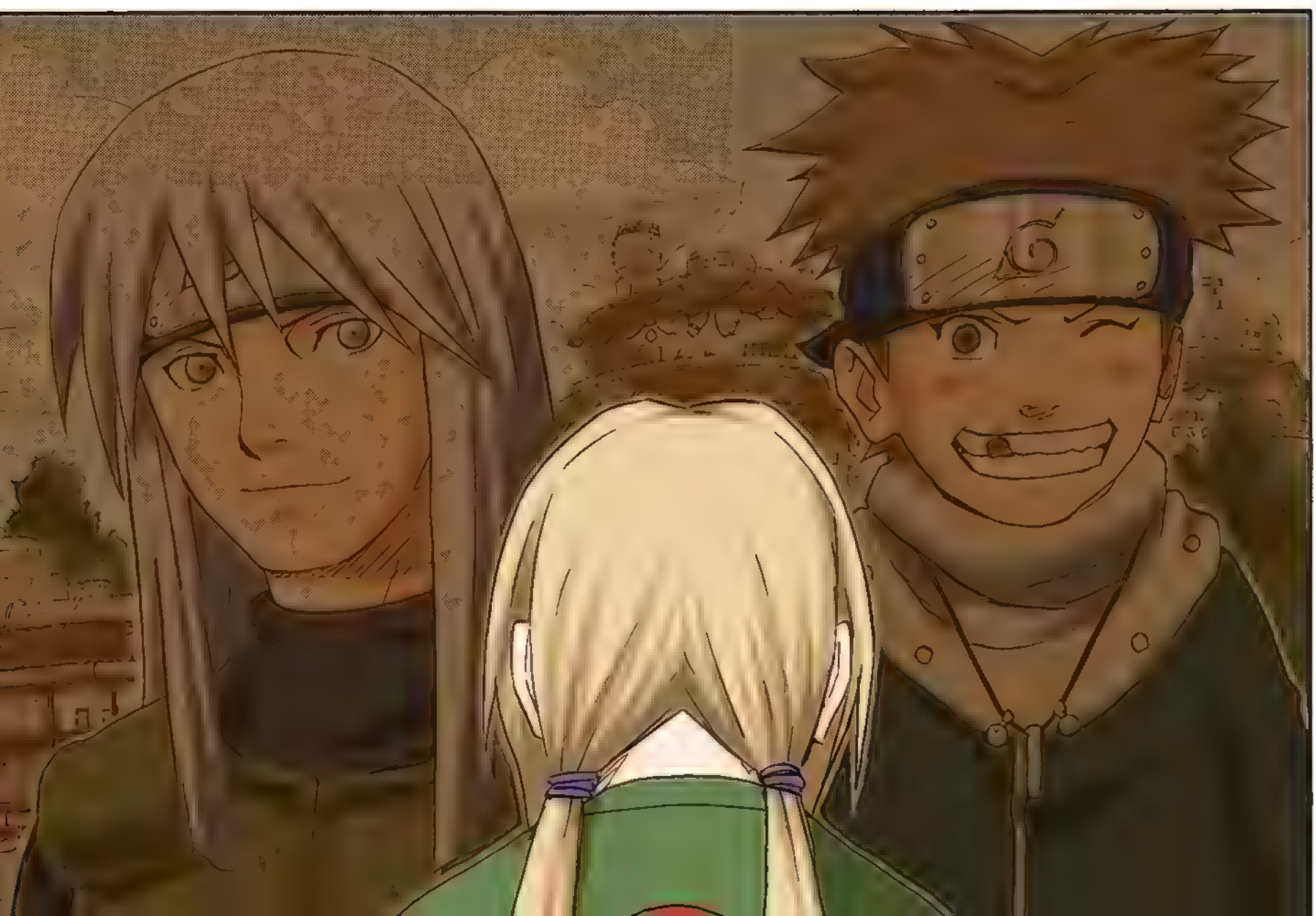


...DAN..

..NAWAKI...

.....

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

...SUPPOSE I FIX THOSE ARMS...

スッ

...SO I'LL BE SQUARE WITH YOU...

I HATE LIES...

..ALONG THE WAY OF CLAIMING THAT WHICH I DESIRE...

!!?

SO WHERE'S THIS CASTLE?

HEY! WAIT!

...THIS TIME I ANNIHILATE KONOHA ONCE AND FOR ALL.

ナンバー

157：TSUNADE'S ANSWER...?!

.....

.....

!

WHAT'S... GOING ON...?

BEATS ME...

!

.....!

THERE ARE MONSTERS UP THERE!

YOU ALL OUGHT TO RUN TOO!

WHAT THE HECK WENT DOWN HERE?

HO THERE, STRANGER! HOLD ON JUST A MINUTE!

!

MONSTERS ?!

.....

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

...WHAT SORT OF MONSTERS ?!

A...A GIANT SERPENT!

IT DESTROYED THE CASTLE IN AN INSTANT!

?!

HOW BIG WAS IT?

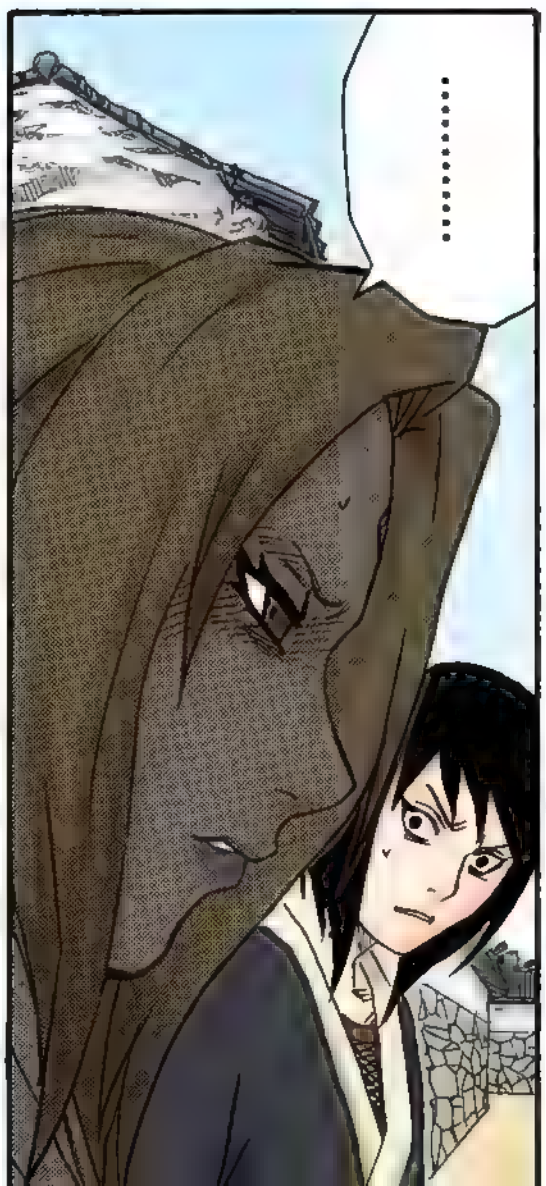
I'VE SEEN ONE BEFORE TOO! IN MY VILLAGE...

I WAS ATTACKED BY THIS HUMONGOUS SNAKE...

C'MON, NARUTO!

!

METHINKS THIS SNAKE...IS THE SAME FELLA YOU MET ONCE...


.....

.....
ANNIHILATE KONOHA?!

LADY TSUNADE!

...YOUR ANSWER?

THAT NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, YOU STILL, DEEP DOWN...

I KNOW IT!

NEITHER YOUR LITTLE BROTHER NOR MY UNCLE WOULD WANT THIS!

NO! YOU MUSTN'T BE TAKEN IN BY THEIR SWEET TALK...!

...HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN *YOUR* WISH... *YOUR* DREAM, LADY TSUNADE!

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THEIR WISHES... OR EVEN MORE SO...

.....

.....

HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE A RESPONSE IN ONE WEEK'S TIME.

...YOU NEED NOT GIVE US YOUR ANSWER THIS VERY MINUTE...

BE STILL, SHIZUNE!

LET'S JUST KILL THEM RIGHT HERE AND NOW! OROCHIMARU'S WEAKENED!

LADY TSUNADE !!

IT'S OUR BEST CHANCE! LADY TSUNADE... TOGETHER WE CAN TAKE THEM ON...!

SO PLEASE HAVE TWO PEOPLE PREPARED ON YOUR END...

...OH AND JUST SO YOU KNOW, THIS FORBIDDEN JUTSU REQUIRES LIVE SACRIFICES...

LADY TSUNADE...

.....

パタタ...

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.....

!!

プル プル

ギュ!

!?

AS ANOTHER OF THE PRODIGAL THREE...HE KNOWS ABOUT *THAT* TOO, HUH...

GRR... DARN...

...I KNOW TSUNADE'S WEAKNESSES, TOO...

I MAY BE WEAKENED... BUT...

...YOUR FEAR OF BLOOD...

IT HASN'T FADED YET, EH...

HEMO-PHOBIA ...?!

♪

.....!

.....

...SHALL WE GET GOING, KABUTO?

...I EXPECT A FAVORABLE RESPONSE.

TSUNADE...

.....

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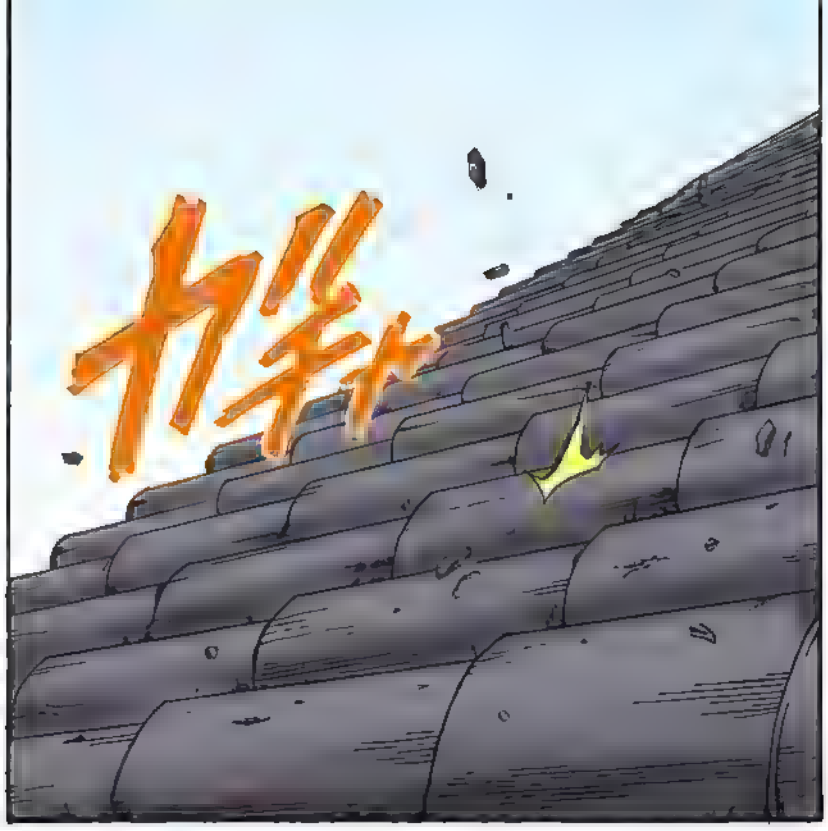
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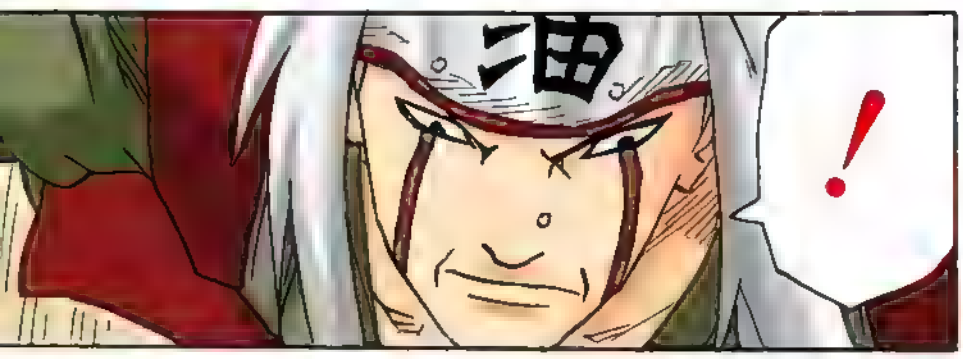
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HMM, DID THE SNAKE DO THIS TOO?!

C'MON, NARUTO. LET'S GO.

.....

LOOKS LIKE WE MISSED THE PARTY...

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酒

百楽

WEL-COME!

.....

URP...

...LADY TSUNADE...

LADY TSUNADE... YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH ALREADY!

YO, MISTER! 'NOTHER!

끼끼끼

WHAT...?! BUT ISN'T THIS A DRINKING ESTABLISH-MENT?

...WELL, EITHER WAY, LET'S GRAB A BITE HERE FIRST...

!

OH!

KID...THIS IS THE BEST PLACE TO GATHER NEWS...

TSUNADE!

JIRAIYA ...?!

!

!

I'VE FINALLY FOUND YOU!

SHE'S SERIOUSLY SO...?!!

WHA... THAT'S LADY TSUNADE ...?!

...THE HECK ARE YOU DOING HERE...?

WHAT...

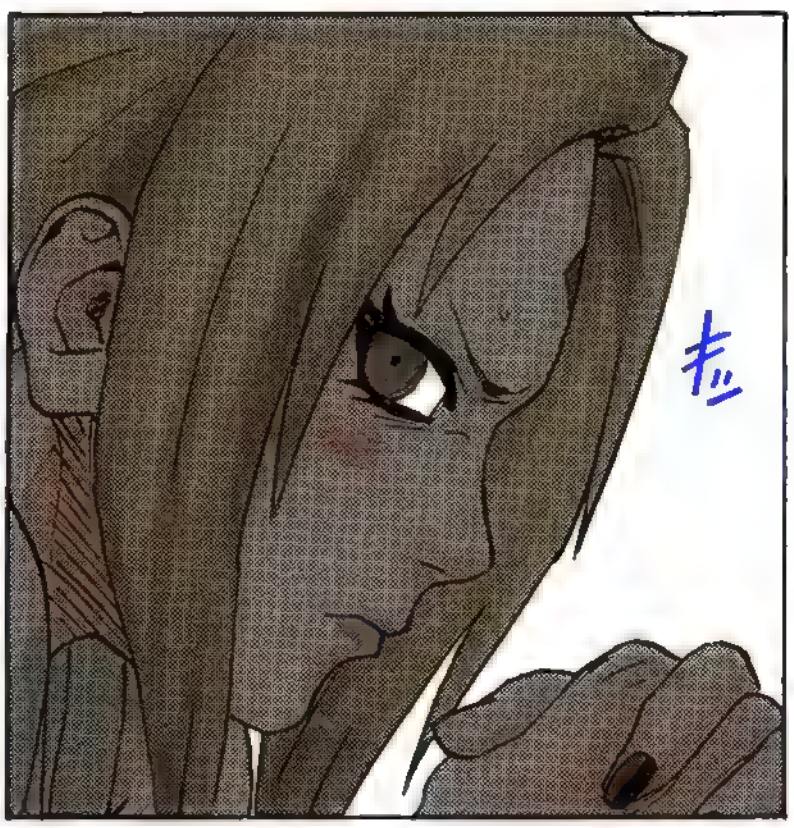
HOW UNCANNY... TO RUN INTO BOTH OF THE OTHER PRODIGAL THREE IN ONE DAY...

'BEEN SEEING A LOT OF FAMILIAR FACES TODAY.

...OROCHI-MARU, RIGHT? ...SO WHAT'S UP?

JUST WANTED TO SAY HI, I GUESS.

NUTHIN', REALLY...



.....

THEY SAY SHE'S A FEMALE NINJA WHO CAN HEAL ANY INJURY... IS IT REALLY TRUE?

EEEE"

SO WHAT'S UP WITH YOU... WHADDAYA WANT FROM ME?

TSUNADE... THE VILLAGE REQUESTS YOU ACCEPT THE TITLE OF FIFTH HOKAGE.

I'LL LAY IT STRAIGHT.

!

.....!

URG!!

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE THIRD LORD?

LORD THIRD... SO IT *WAS* TRUE...

F...FIFTH HOKAGE?!!

HACK! GUGH!

...! WHERE THE HECK DID THAT COME FROM?!! WHAT'S GOING ON?!

...!

OROCHIMARU DID HIM IN, RIGHT...?

I HEARD, STRAIGHT FROM THE SNAKE'S MOUTH, AS IT WERE...

WHO THE HECK'S OROCHI-MARU?!

HE KILLED THE THIRD HOKAGE ?!

OROCHI-MARU...?!

...OROCHI-MARU DID IT...?

...?!!

JIRAIYA, WHO IS THIS BRAT?

.....

...THE THIRD MEMBER OF OUR PRODIGAL THREE.

WHAT?!

BUT I THOUGHT THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI WERE ALL FROM KONOHA!

SO WHY?!

キュ

SO THIS LAD...HAS THE NINE-TAILS...

!

THIS IS UZUMAKI NARUTO...

.....

WELL? DO YOU ACCEPT?

...SO!

JUST HUSH UP, NARUTO!

...AND WHY HER FOR FIFTH HOKAGE?!

油

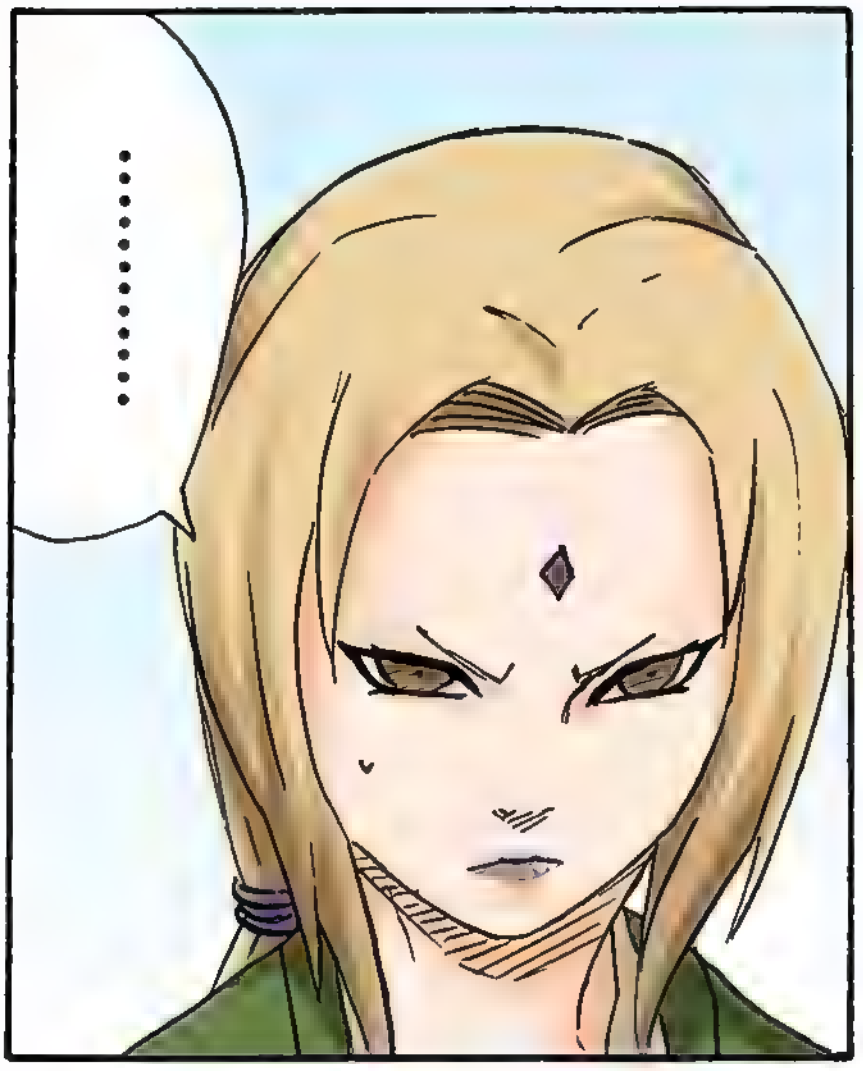
AARGH ...

.....

.....

...THIS TIME I ANNIHILATE KONOHA ONCE AND FOR ALL.

..I CAN REANIMATE YOUR BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER AND LOVER BOTH...



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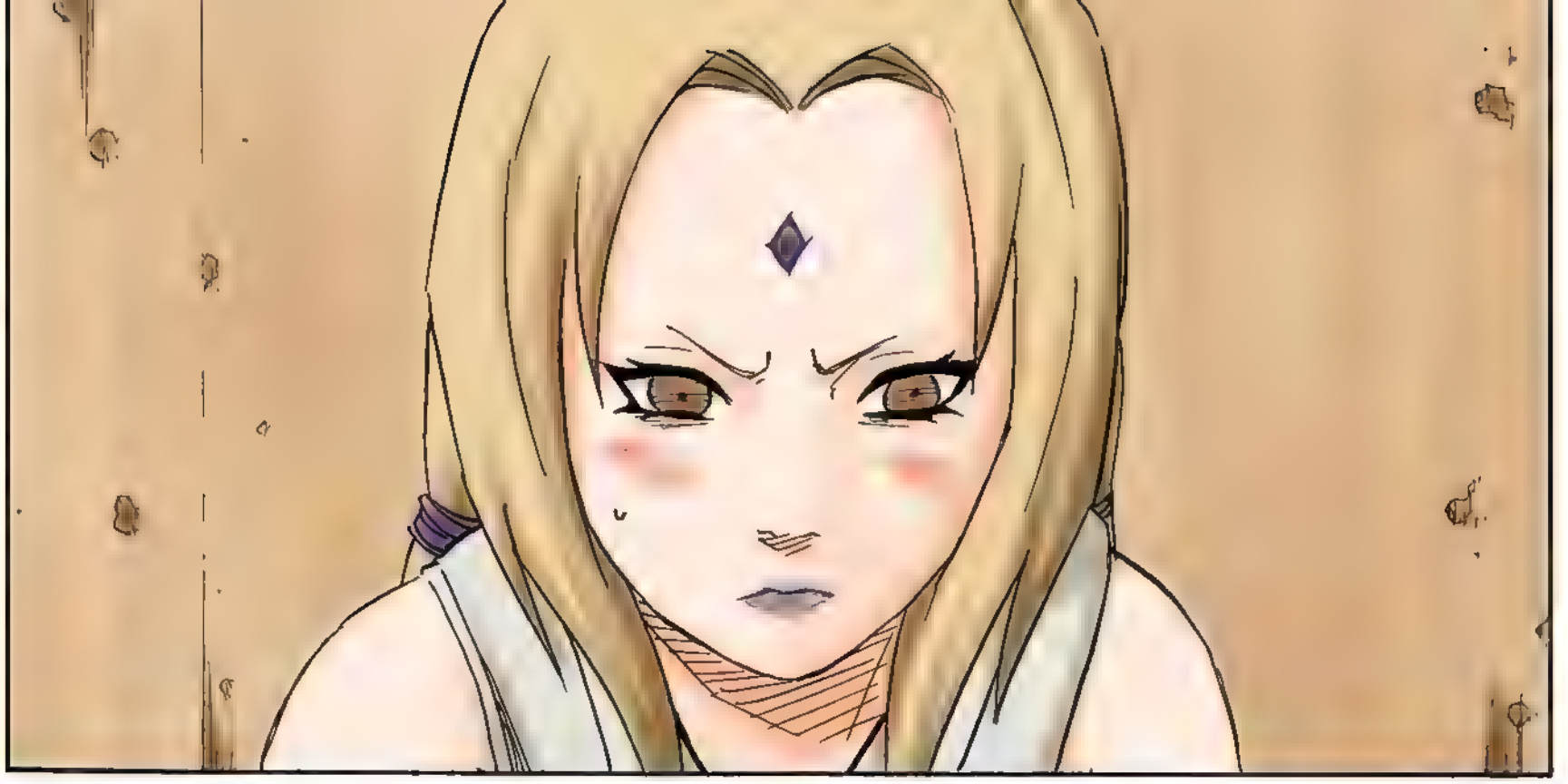
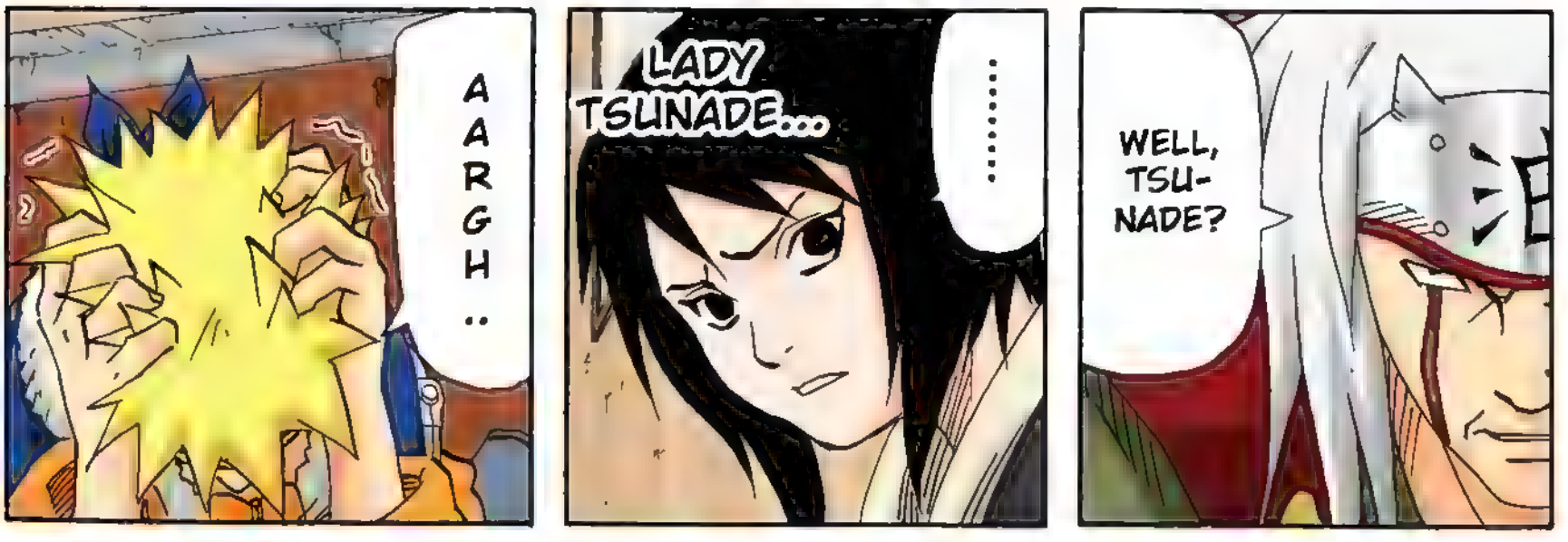
158：NO FORGIVENESS...!!




AARGH..
LADY TSUNADE...
.....
WELL, TSU-NADE?

NO THANKS!
...SORRY...

!

!

!

!

WHAT THE HECK'S GOING ON?!

SO WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT IN THE BEGINNING ABOUT SOME RESEARCH, EH?!

AARGH...

I REMEMBER YOU USED IT ONCE BEFORE WHEN I ASKED YOU TO GO OUT WITH ME.

THAT LINE... BRINGS BACK MEM-ORIES.

WHERE DID THIS HOKAGE THING COME FROM?!

...AND WORSE! SHE TURNED IT DOWN!!

YOU KNOW WHAT, I DON'T CARE! WE'RE GOING TO DRAG HER BACK WITH US TO THE VILLAGE AND HAVE HER FIX SASUKE AND MASTER KAKASHI, RIGHT?!

CALM YOURSELF.

TSUNADE'S THE ONLY POSSIBLE CHOICE FOR THE FIFTH HOKAGE...

.....

...LADY TSUNADE...

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE CONSIDERING ACCEPTING OROCHIMARU'S OFFER..

!

FURTHERMORE, TSUNADE IS THE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF THE FIRST HOKAGE, SO SHE IS A KONOHA SHINOBI OF A MOST WORTHY BLOODLINE...

NOT ONLY DID SHE CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TOWARDS KONOHA'S VICTORY DURING THE TURBULENT ERA OF GREAT WAR...

BUT THERE ARE STILL NONE WHO CAN STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH HER IN REGARDS TO BATTLE OR MEDICAL JUTSU.

SO THE OPINIONS OF ONE JUNIOR NINJA DON'T REALLY COUNT...

THIS IS THE DECISION OF KONOHA'S HIGHEST-RANKING WILL, THE COUNSELORS.

AND THEN, LIKE YOU SAID...

WE CAN HAVE HER TAKE A LOOK AT SASUKE AND KAKASHI.

IF SHE WOULD JUST AGREE TO BECOME HOKAGE, WE CAN GO HOME.

AW, COME ON, EVERYBODY PALES IN COMPARISON TO THE FOURTH LORD.

WHAT ?!

...UNLIKE YOUR LAST DISCIPLE, THIS KID'S GOT WORSE MOUTH, BRAINS...

AND EVEN MUG.

HEH... JIRAIYA.

ゾズッ

HE WAS OVERFLOWING WITH TALENT FOR JUTSU AND INTELLIGENCE... HE WAS SOCIALLY POPULAR...AND WELL, HE WAS QUITE A LOOKER, JUST LIKE ME.

AS A SHINOBI, HIS CAPACITY WAS UNPARALLELED, A TRUE ONE-OF-A-KIND...

...BUT EVEN WITH ALL THAT GOING FOR HIM, HE DIED PREMATURELY...

油

SACRAFICING HIS LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF THE VILLAGE...

.....

.....

LIFE IS NOT LIKE MONEY...

...TO RISK AND THROW IT AWAY SO EASILY...

IS A FOOL'S ERRAND.

AND YET IN THE END, THEY DIED IN VAIN FOR THE VILLAGE, WHILE STIL IN THE MIDST OF PURSUING THEIR DREAMS.

THEY SAY BOTH MY GRANDFATHER AND THE SECOND LORD...WANTED AN END TO HOSTILITIES MORE THAN ANYTHING...

TIME CHANGES PEOPLE.

HUMPH... I AM IN MY FIFTIES, YOU KNOW...

YOU'VE CHANGED, TSUNADE....

I DON'T KNOW IF THESE THOUGHTS HAD BEEN RUNNING THROUGH YOUR MIND THE WHOLE TIME, BUT TO ACTUALLY BE VOICING THEM...

油

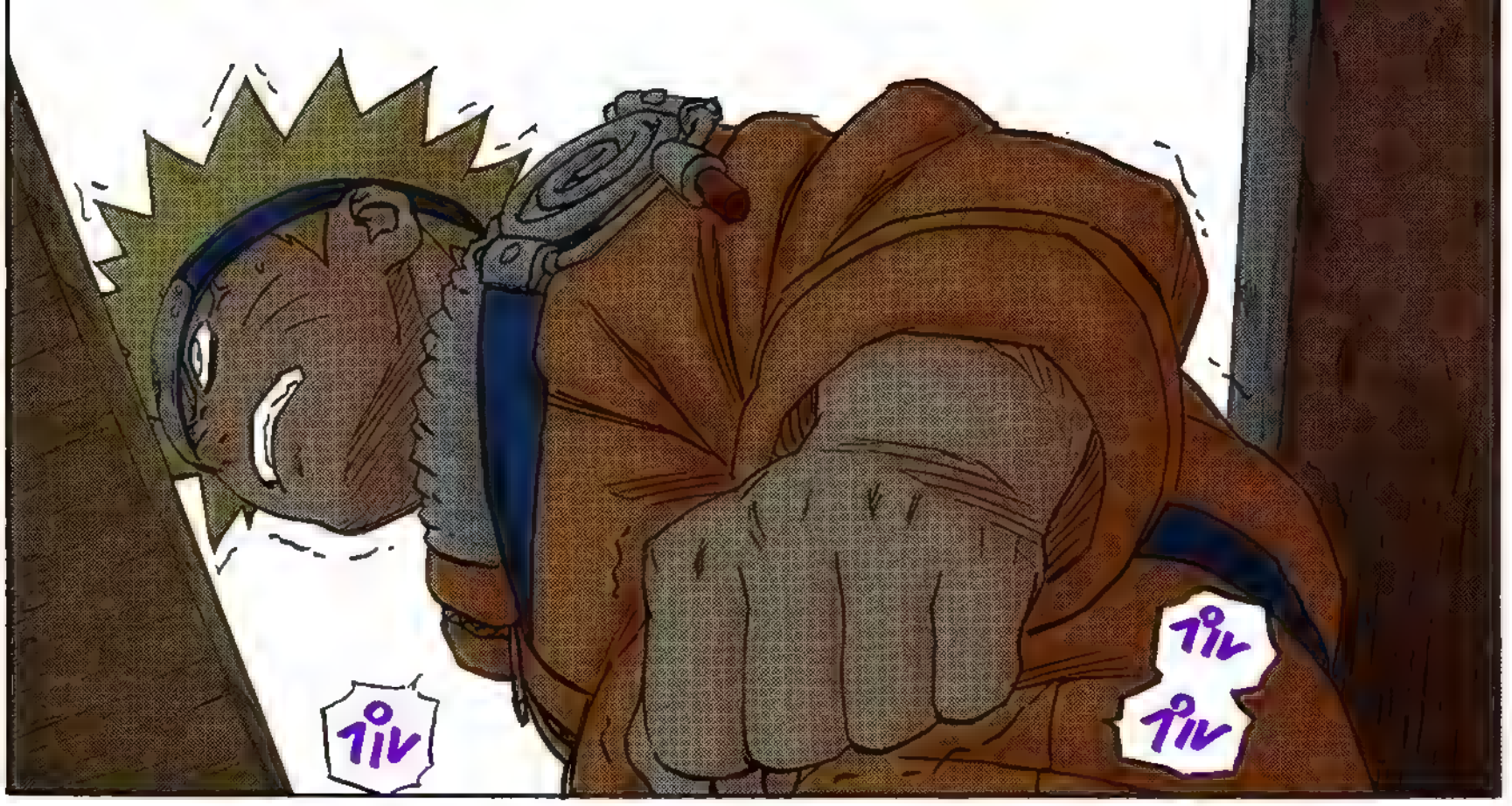
ピクッ

.....

油

IF A TEETERING GEEZER TRIES TO ACT YOUTHFUL, OF COURSE HE'S GOING TO CROAK!

SAME THING WITH MASTER SARUTOBI...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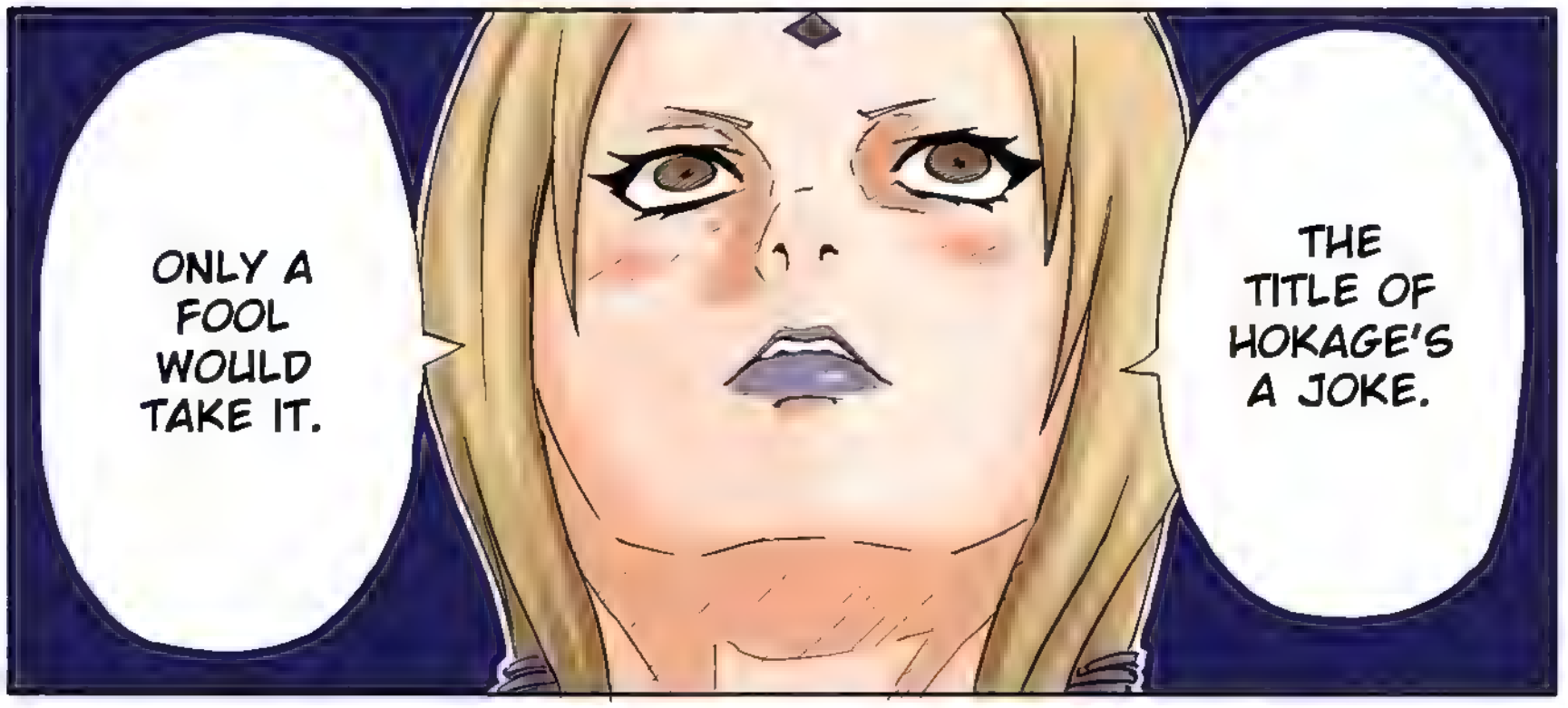
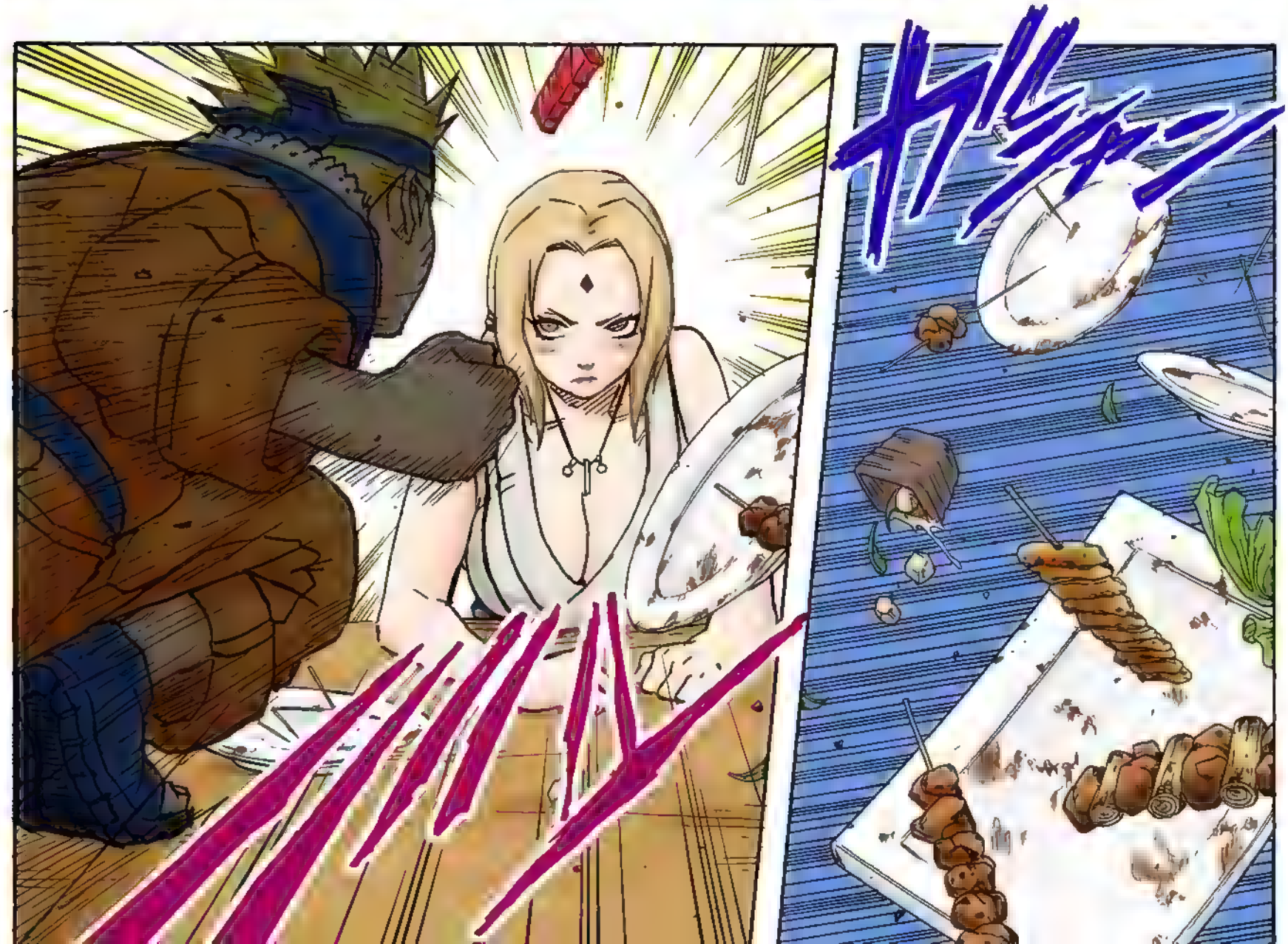

ONLY A FOOL WOULD TAKE IT.
THE TITLE OF HOKAGE'S A JOKE.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GGH!

カ"ヴ…

カ"…

CAN I HELP YOU?

はなせ～!

WH... WHAT'S GOING ON?

LEMME GO !!!

DOWN! THIS IS A PUB.

HEYYY !!!

.....

I AIN'T GONNA JUST STAND HERE AND LET YOU INSULT THE OLD MAN OR THE FOURTH HOKAGE...!!

UGH...

LADY TSU-NADE ...!

I'LL SLUG YOU WITH ALL I'VE GOT!!!

I DON'T CARE THAT YOU'RE A LADY!!

M'M

.....

.....

.....

.....

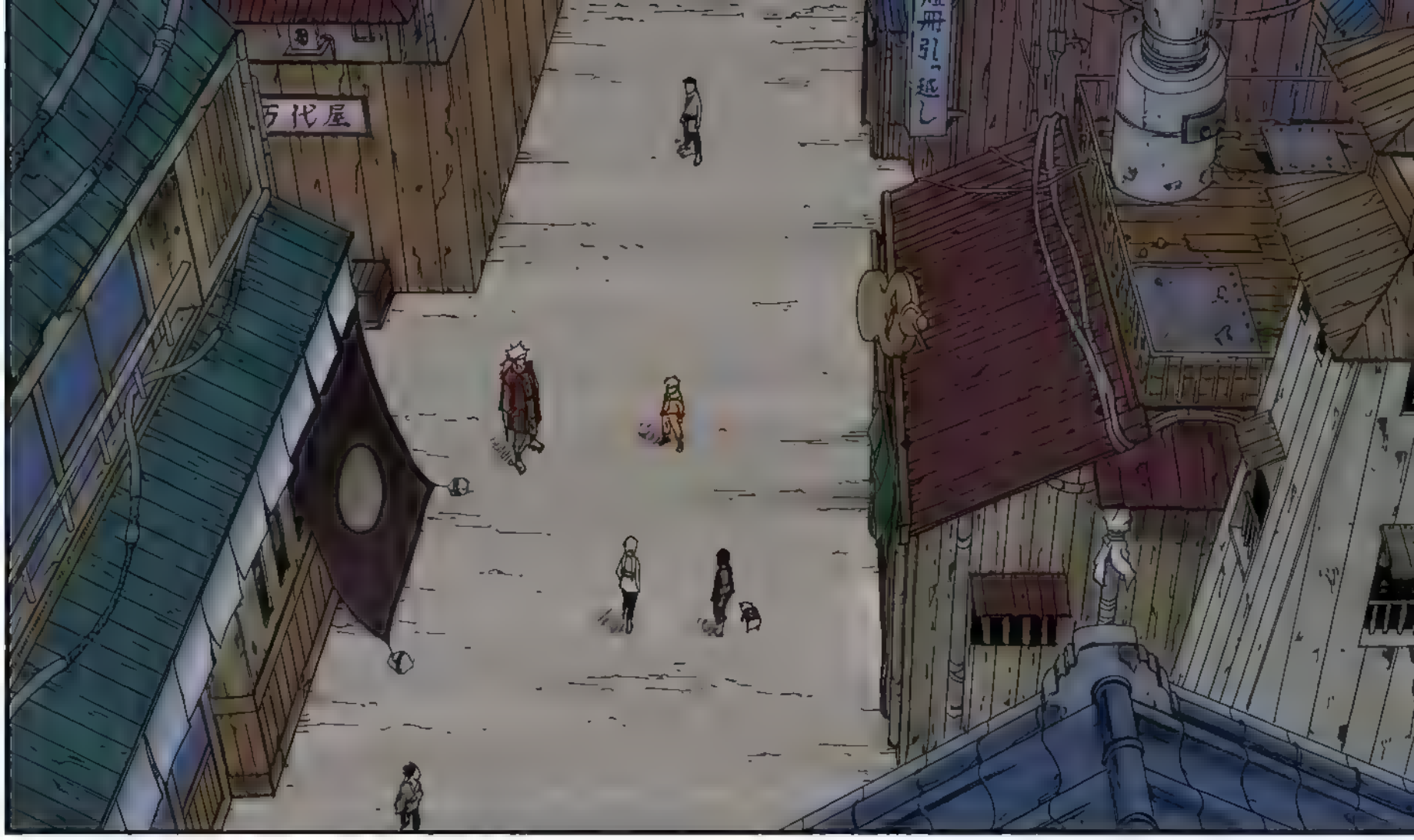
COME ON OUTSIDE WITH ME... BRAT.

...LADY TSUNADE!

.....

YOU GOT GUTS, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT... TO SAY IT TO MY FACE...

GRR...!!


万代屋
短冊引き延し

WHAT ?!!

I DON'T NEED MY FULL STRENGTH AGAINST A GENIN.
DESPITE HOW I MIGHT LOOK, I WAS ONCE COUNTED AMONG THE PRODIGAL THREE.

SIGH...
……
油

……
ズザザ

THIS ONE FINGER'LL BE ENOUGH.
スッ

GIVE ME A BREAK !!

OW!

ARGH!

!

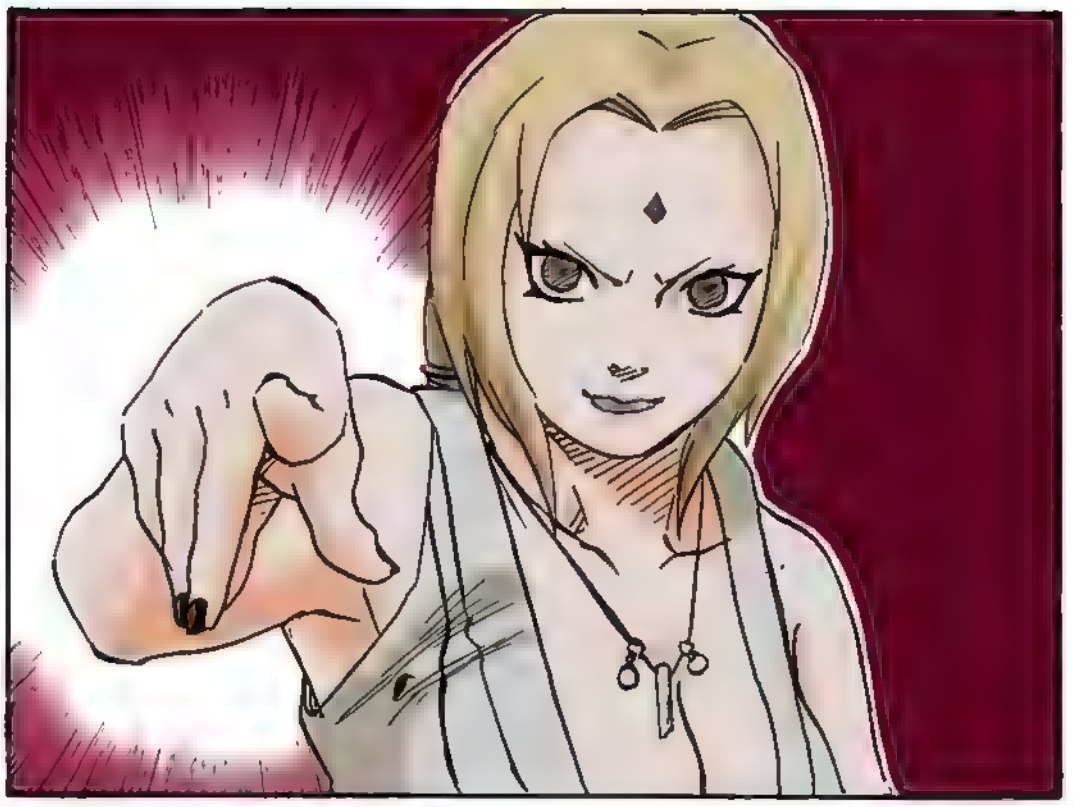
GAH!

LADY TSU-NADE ...

ドサッ

UNH...

SHE FLICKED MY FORE-HEAD...?! HOW DARE SHE...!



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!

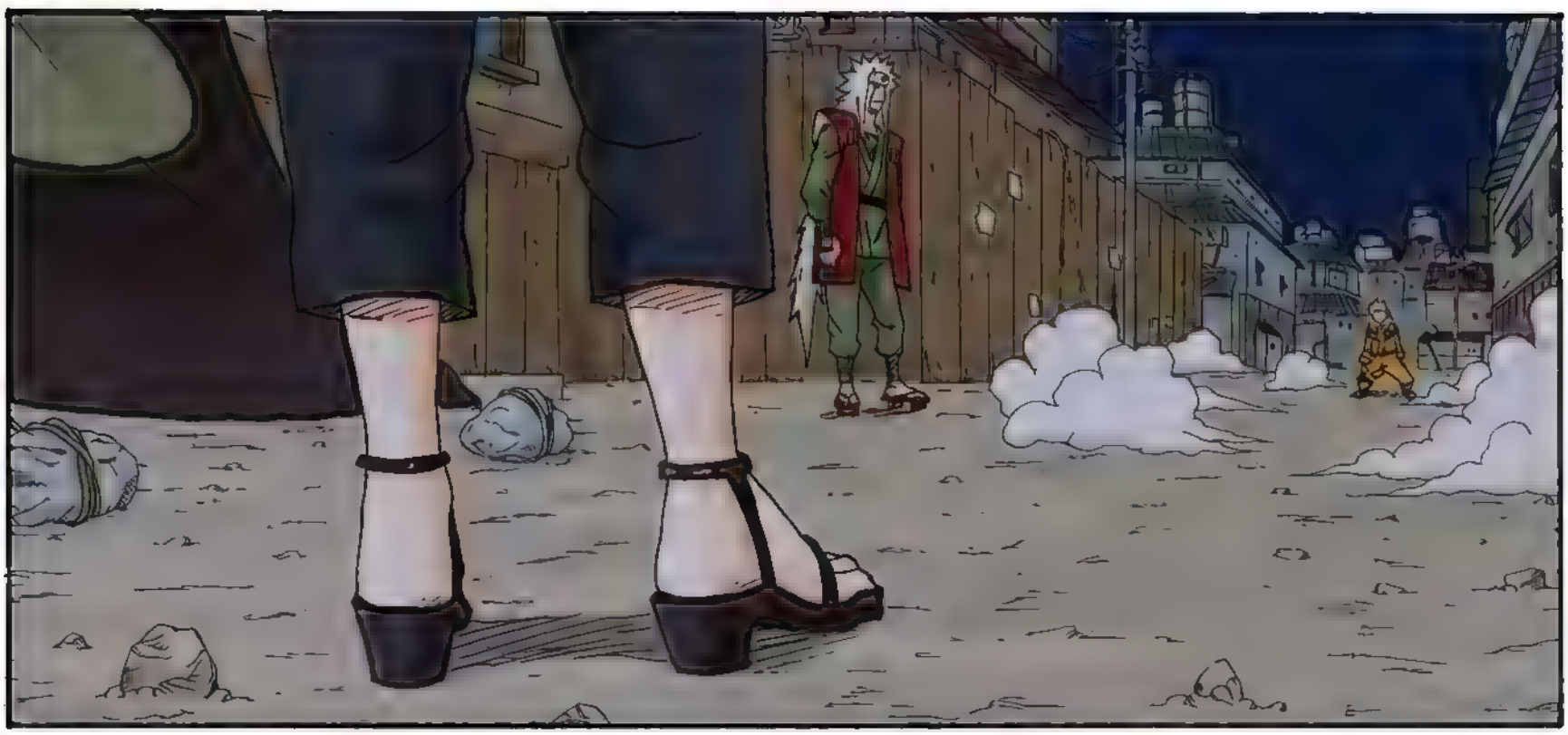
...HEY!
...KID!

I'VE JUST GOT ONE QUESTION FOR YOU BEFORE YOU PASS OUT.

.....!

WHY...

...ARE YOU SO SENSITIVE ABOUT THE TITLE HOKAGE?



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I WANT THAT TITLE SOMEDAY...!

...'CUZ UNLIKE YOU...

TO BE HOKAGE IS MY DREAM!

...GRUNT...

THIS CHILD...

.....

.....

I SHOULD USE THAT JUTSU...!

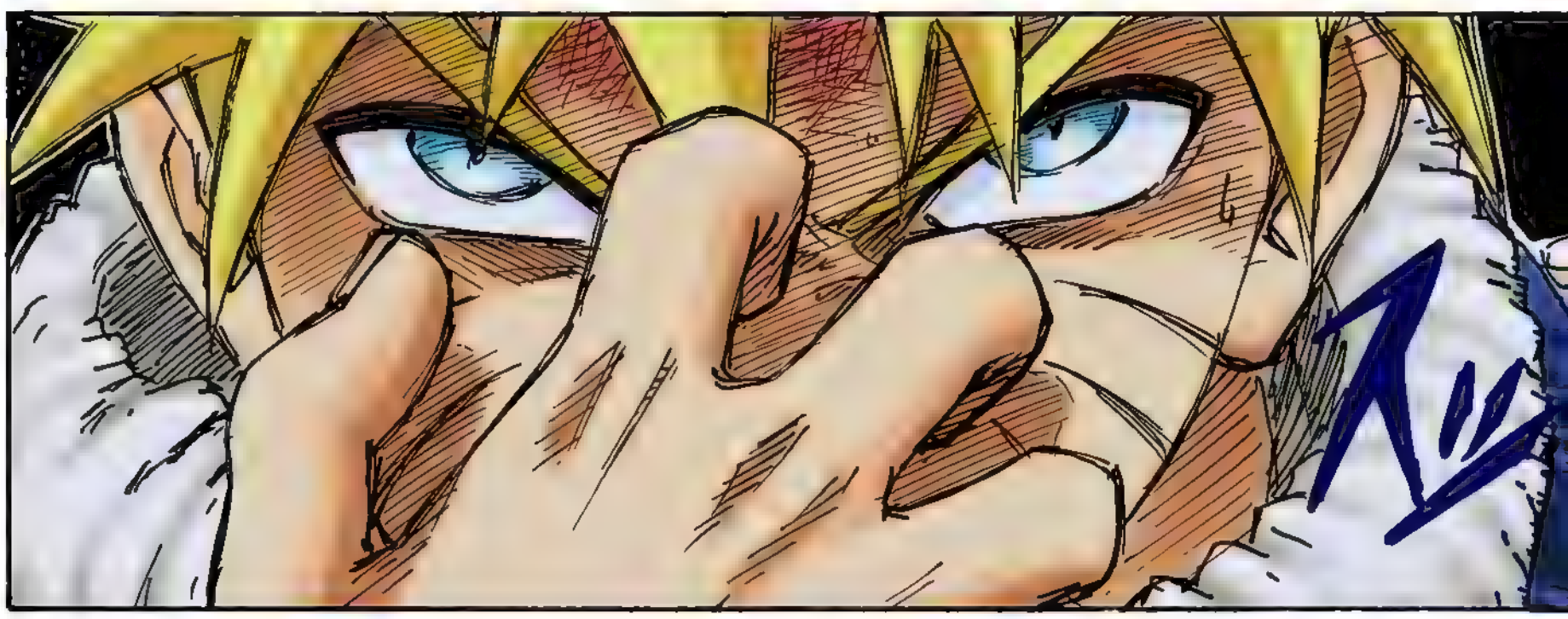
...I CAN...

WHAT THE?!

...I COULD...!

!?

.....



.....

HUNH?

!

カカッ!!

HAAH !!

TAKE THIS !!

!!

WHA...THIS JUTSU'S...!!

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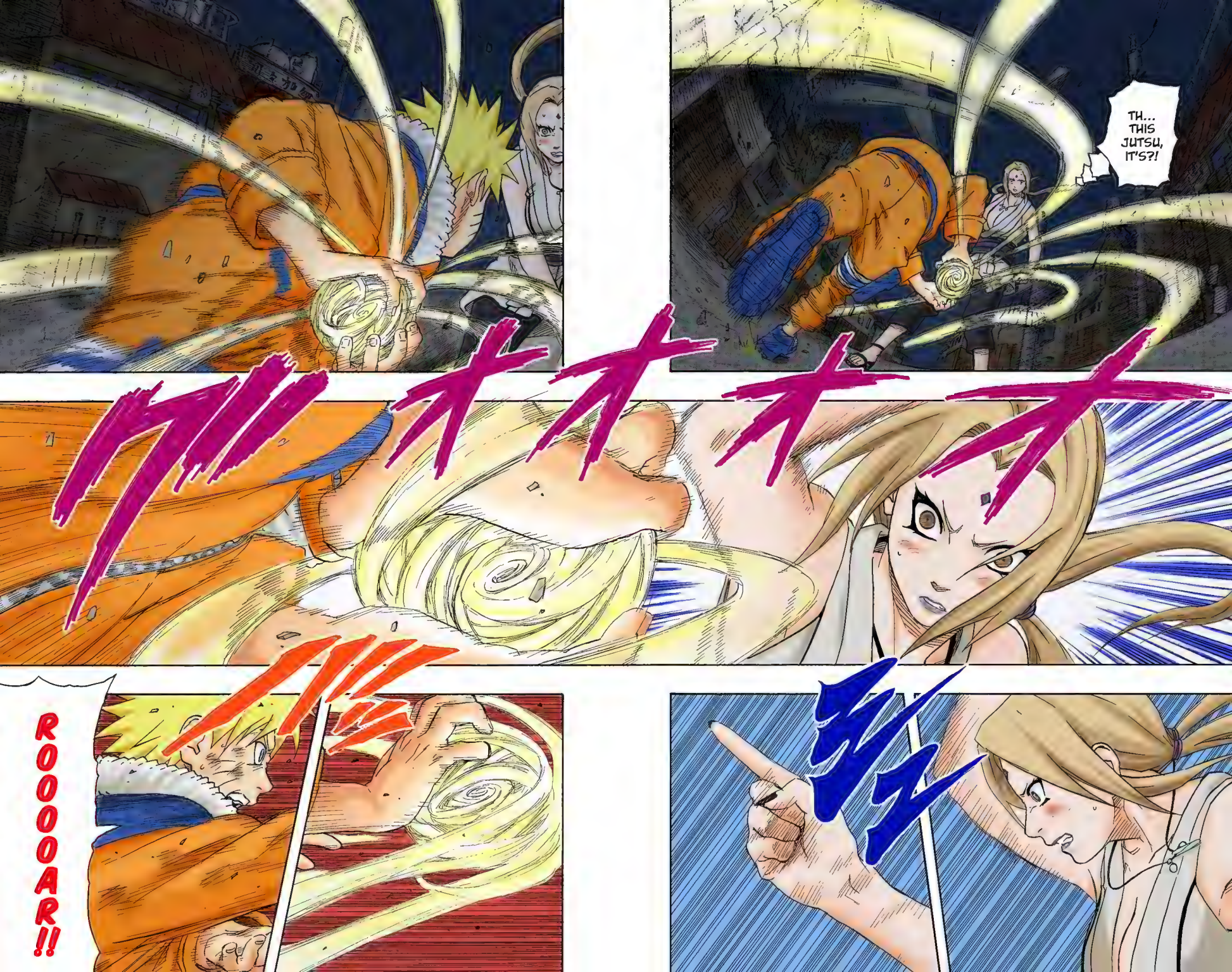
159 : THE WAGER...!!


TH... THIS JUTSU, IT'S?!
ROOOAR!!

ガン

!

WAAH!

ガン

!!

ガッ

KA-BOOM

ARGH!!

ズザザッ

...I NEVER EXPECTED HIM... TO TRY TO USE THE FOURTH LORD'S JUTSU.

.....

...I REMEMBER ONCE GETTING CLOBBERED BY HER AND BEING BLOWN BACK ALMOST 100 METERS...

THAT TSUNADE... STILL GOT MONSTER STRENGTH, EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, EH...

.....

BUT EITHER WAY, NARUTO, YOU GOTTA DO BETTER...

うぐっ…くそっ！

HACK... HACK!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT...?

ONLY REMOTELY SIMILAR TO THAT JUTSU...

UGH...

...BUT IT'S STILL FAR FROM COMPLETE...

酒

百楽

HUMPH... THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN MANAGE THAT JUTSU ARE YOU AND THE FOURTH LORD.

I AM HIS MENTOR, YOU KNOW... FOR THE PRESENT...

RASENGAN...?!

...THAT'S PRETTY CRUEL.

PLAYING MIGHTY MENTOR BY TEACHING HIM JUTSU HE HAS NO HOPE OF MASTERING?

WHO TAUGHT HIM THE RASENGAN?!

JIRAIYA, WAS IT YOU?

.....

.....

THAT'S HOW DREAMY-EYED BRATS GET STARTED ON THE WHOLE *I'M GOING TO BECOME HOKAGE* FARCE!

SHUT UP! SHUT UP!!

IT'S NOT A FARCE!!

GIVE ME THREE DAYS, AND I'LL MASTER THIS JUTSU FOR YOU!!

.....

HEH!

BUT A MAN DOESN'T BREAK HIS WORD, YOU KNOW!

FEH... NICE WORDS, BRAT...

...THAT'S MY SHINOBI WAY!

I NEVER GO BACK ON MY WORD...

...GRUNT...

.....

.....

...LET'S MAKE A WAGER.

...THEN...

...AND I'LL GIVE YOU THIS NECKLACE.

WAGER...?

IF YOU MANAGE TO MASTER THIS JUTSU IN THAT TIME, I'LL ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU ARE WORTHY OF BECOMING HOKAGE...

...I'LL GIVE YOU A WHOLE WEEK.

NO THANKS, I DON'T WANT SOME OLD NECKLACE!

!

LADY TSUNADE?! B...BUT THAT'S...!

!

YOU COULD BUY THREE MOUNTAINS IF YOU SOLD IT...

...NOW NOW, DON'T SAY THAT, NARUTO...

IT'S MADE FROM A UNIQUE ORE THAT BELONGED TO THE FIRST HOKAGE.

AND ALL YOUR EASY CASH IS MINE!!

HOWEVER, IF YOU FAIL TO MASTER THE JUTSU BY THE END OF SEVEN DAYS...

YOU LOSE!

O...OH... OKAY!

WH... WHOA...

...WHAT A MER-CENARY...

LADY TSUNADE...

.....

WHEN THE HECK DID SHE ...?!

HEY! MY FROGGIE!

...SHE'S NEVER WAGERED THE NECKLACE BEFORE...

一子相伝 短刀

HMPH, IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S GOING TO MANAGE IT...

BUT WHY?! THE NECKLACE IS...!

スッ

!

!

LET'S GO, SHIZUNE!

FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE...

TSUNADE... WON'T YOU COME DRINKING A BIT LONGER WITH ME?

!

油

.....

HOWEVER, HE WOULD LIKE A RESPONSE IN ONE WEEK'S TIME.

...YOU NEED NOT GIVE US YOUR ANSWER THIS VERY MINUTE...

SHIZUNE, COULD YOU TAKE NARUTO WITH YOU AND GO LOOK FOR THE NIGHT'S LODGINGS?

……!

カラ カラ

……

THAT OK WITH YOU?

?

THANK YOU... LORD JIRAIYA...

……

YES, SIR!

THERE YA GO!

……

HUMPH! I DON'T GOT THE HOTS FOR YOU NEITHER!

…AND YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL…

LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR. I STILL HAVE NO INTEREST IN YOU.

チラチラ

MAN…YOU'VE GOTTEN EVEN PRETTIER THAN THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU…

……

……

……

…WHAT'D YOU JUST SAY?!

ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU'RE ACTUALLY LIKE AN OLD WOMAN NOW…

NOTHING…

WHY SHOULD HE...?

.....

...NARUTO.

WHAT?

SO DOES IT BOTHER YOU...?

YOU KNOW THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN MASTER THAT JUTSU IN UNDER A WEEK.

I WOULDN'T CALL IT A WAGER...

WELL, THAT WAS PRETTY IMMATURE, CHALLENGING A KID LIKE THAT...

.....

I'M *NOT* DESPERATE!

WHY SO DES-PERATE...?

TSK...

.....

油

YOU MEETING WITH OROCHI-MARU?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF OFFER HE MADE YOU, BUT...

I SAW THE LOOK ON SHIZUNE'S FACE.

.....!

.....

OH, AND...

...I GOTTA TELL YOU ONE THING.

...JUST DON'T RUSH INTO IT.

...THAT WAS THE DREAM THEY FOUGHT FOR!

...THEY WANTED AN END TO TURBULENT DAYS AND TO SEE THE VILLAGE PROSPER. IT WAS THOSE IDEALS...

EVERY ONE OF THE PREVIOUS HOKAGE RISKED THIER LIVES TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE OF KONOHA AND ALL THOSE WHO LIVE THERE...

.....

BUT...IF YOU SHOULD EVER HAPPEN TO DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD BETRAY OUR VILLAGE OF KONOHA...

I DOUBT THAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND OUR PREDECESSORS' FEELINGS.

...WHY SHOULD I CARE ANYMORE, EH!

IT IS ONLY PSYCHOPATHS WHO HEAR OF THE DEATHS OF THOSE CLOSE TO THEM AND FEEL NOTHING.

.....

THAT'S NOT YOU, IS IT?

.....

I'LL PERSONALLY HUNT YOU DOWN AND KILL YOU!

.....

.....

THAT'S ENOUGH!

EVEN THAT DAY...

YOU USED TO BE THE FIRST TO CARE ABOUT THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF FELLOW VILLAGERS...

.....

...IS MY DREAM!

TO BE HOKAGE...

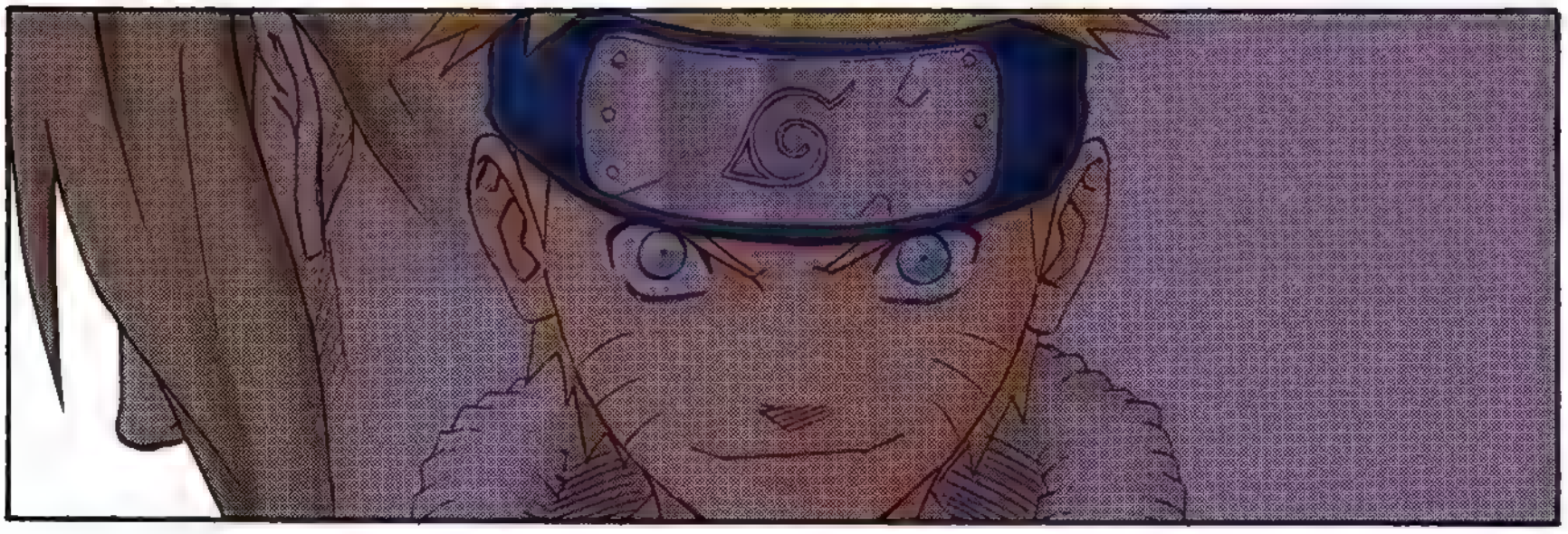
WHY... DID YOU BRING ALONG THAT BRAT.

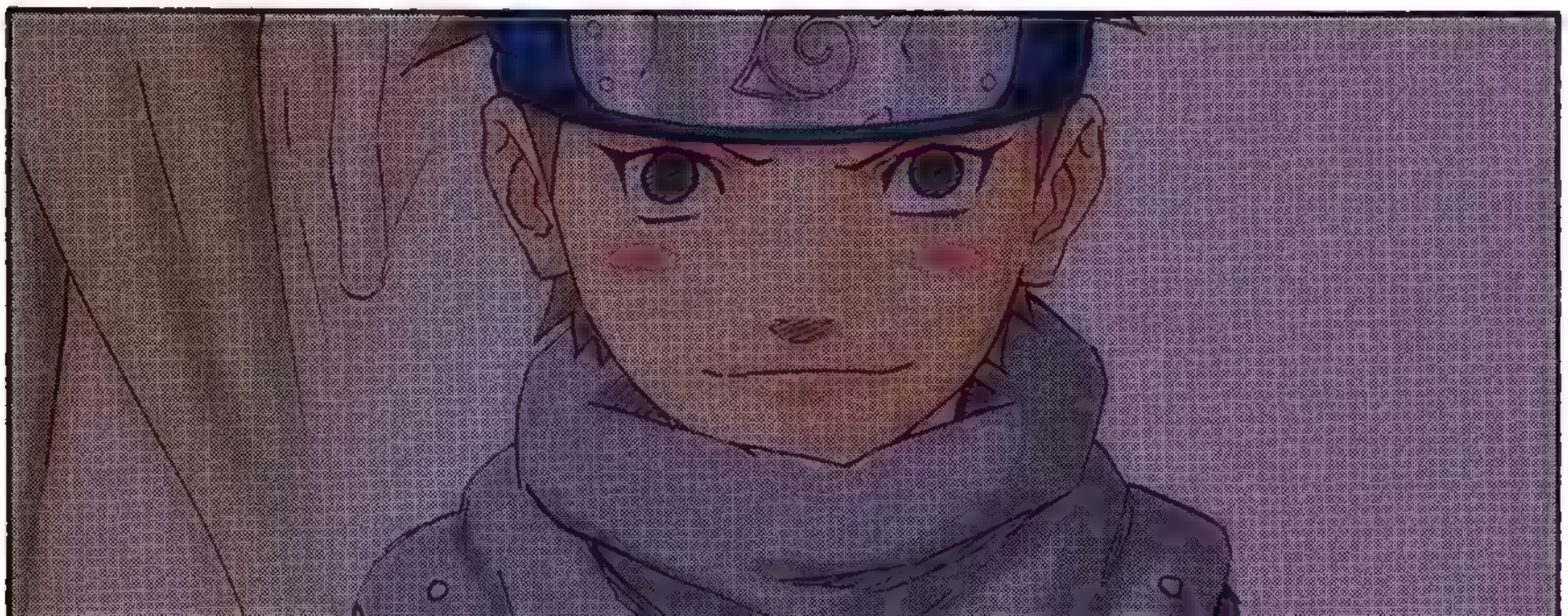
.....

.....

UNCANNY, ISN'T IT? ...HE'S EVEN ABOUT THE SAME AGE...

.....





...IS MY DREAM!

TO BE HOKAGE...

DON'T YOU TELL A MAN TO RUN!!

YOU'RE STILL A GENIN, NAWAKI, SO ON THE BATTLEFIELD, IT'S OKAY TO RUN OFF!

SHEESH, ALWAYS TAKING SUCH RISKS...DO YOU WANT TO DIE?!

EVEN HIS DREAM... AND HIS DRIVE...

.....

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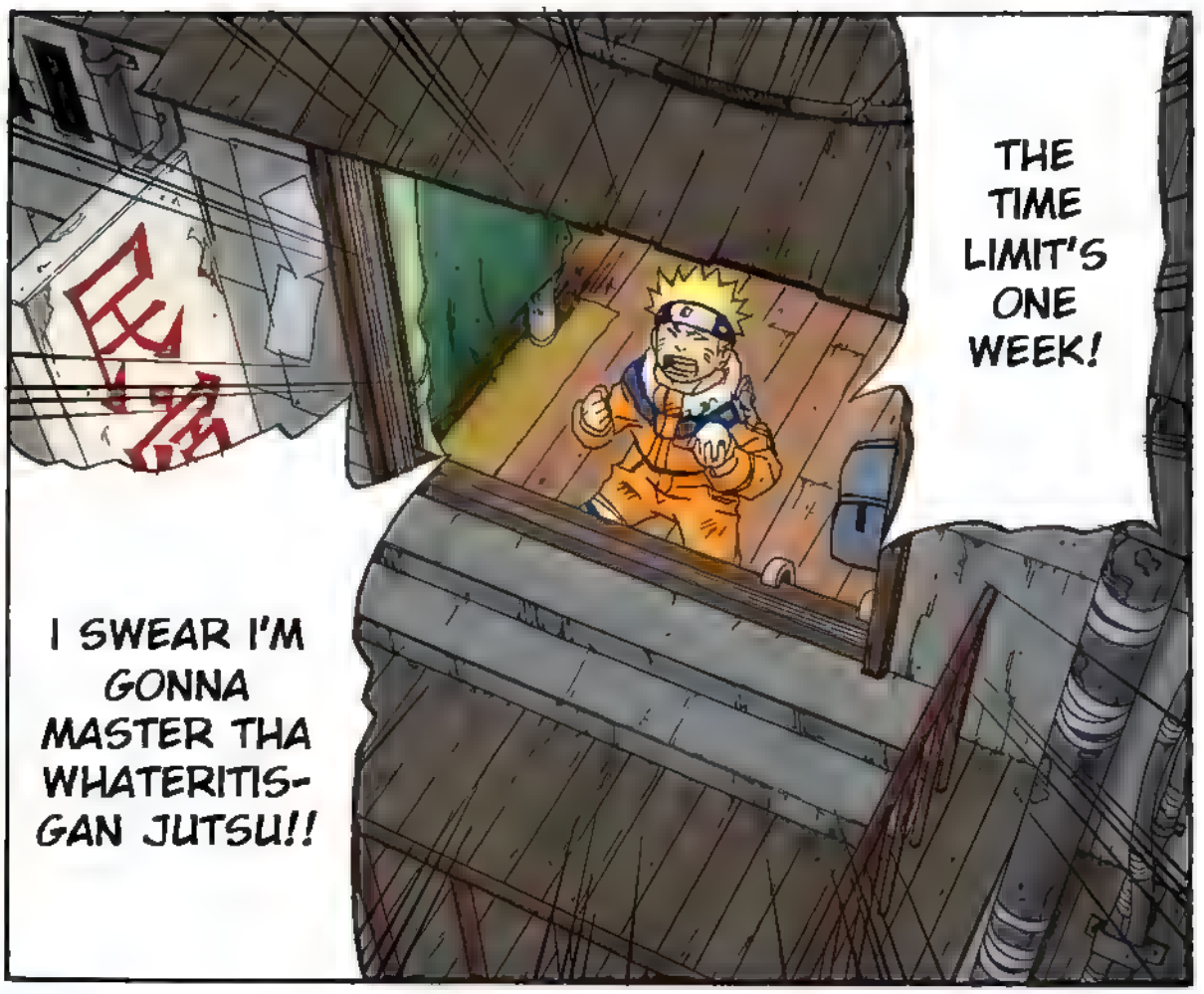
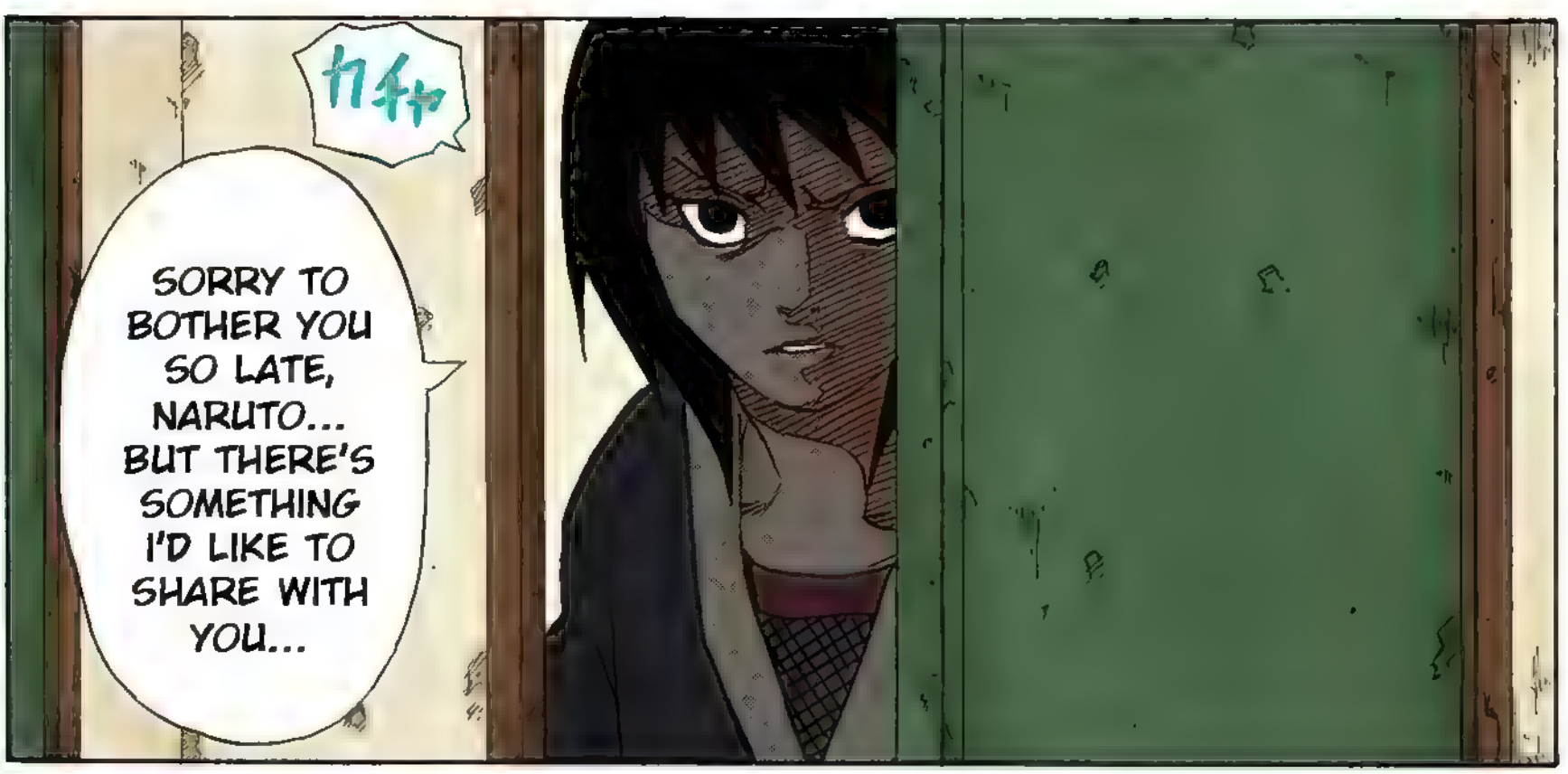

THE TIME LIMIT'S ONE WEEK!
I SWEAR I'M GONNA MASTER THA WHATERITIS-GAN JUTSU!!


カチャ
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SO LATE, NARUTO... BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU...

ナンバー

160：

THE NECKLACE OF DEATH...!!

I NEED TO REST UP TONIGHT SO I CAN TRAIN EARLY!

IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT... WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ?!

I'M SORRY...

...BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO MISUNDER-STAND LADY TSUNADE...

...AND I WANTED TO EXPLAIN ABOUT THE NECKLACE, TOO...

.....

HUMPH! WHAT DO I CARE ABOUT THAT OLD LADY?!

LADY TSUNADE ISN'T THE KIND OF PERSON YOU THINK SHE IS!

PLEASE DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS WITHOUT KNOWING ANYTHING!

.....

I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T MEAN TO RAISE MY VOICE AT YOU...

...

SHE WAS KIND AND COMPASSION-ATE...SHE REALLY LOVED THE VILLAGE...

SHE WASN'T LIKE THAT AT ALL, LONG AGO...

BUT THEN... SHE CHANGED...

...ALL BECAUSE OF THAT DAY.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN... THAT DAY...?

...

THAT DAY...?

?!

...HER DREAMS, HER LOVE, EVEN HOPE ITSELF!

THE DAY SHE LOST EVERY-THING...

...WAS THE NECKLACE, LOADED WITH MEMORIES...

...ALL THAT REMAINED AFTER-WARDS...

.....!?

IT'S NOT SOMETHING SHE WOULD EASILY HAND OVER ON A WAGER...

THE NECKLACE IS AS PRECIOUS TO LADY TSUNADE AS HER OWN LIFE...

SHE'S THE ONE WHO PUT IT ON THE TABLE!

HOW WOULD I KNOW THAT?!

?

IT'S NO ORDINARY NECK-LACE...

AND...THE NECKLACE IS NOT MEANT FOR YOU!

...IF ANYONE ELSE TRIES TO WEAR IT, THEY ALL EVENTUALLY...

IT ONLY ACKNOWLEDGES LADY TSUNADE...

……!?

...DIE!!

HUMPH ...

...BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU STILL HANG ON TO THE NECKLACE...

I THOUGHT YOU'D ALREADY LOST IT IN A WAGER.

.....

...IT'S A MEMENTO, ISN'T IT...?

OH, COME ON!

YOU ARE STILL A KID!

YOU KNOW, I'M NOT A KID ANY-MORE!

DON'T KEEP GETTING ME BIRTHDAY PRESENTS!

HAPPY 12TH BIRTHDAY!

NAWAKI!

ナ・ル

?

ナルト

I BET YOU'RE GONNA LIKE IT!

BESIDES, HURRY UP AND OPEN IT!

!

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU TO HAVE IT.

I MEAN, YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED IT... SO TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT!

I LOVE YOU, SIS!

カバッ

YUP...IT WAS THE FIRST HOKAGE'S, OUR BELOVED GRANDFATHER'S, HOKAGE NECKLACE!

BUT BIG SIS, ISN'T THIS...

YUP!

I'M GONNA BE STRONG LIKE GRANDPA AND ONE DAY BE GRANTED THE TITLE OF HOKAGE!

HO HO... NICE WORDS, BUT A MAN DOESN'T BREAK HIS WORD, YOU KNOW!

'CUZ I'M THE GRANDSON OF THE FIRST HOKAGE, THE BUILDER OF KONOHA!

IT'S NOT JUST THIS NECKLACE, YOU KNOW!

THE ENTIRE VILLAGE WAS GRANDPA'S TREASURE! AND I'M GOING TO DEFEND IT!

'CUZ TO BE HOKAGE IS MY DREAM.

JUST DO IT. I'VE GOT ONE MORE PRESENT FOR YOU.

?

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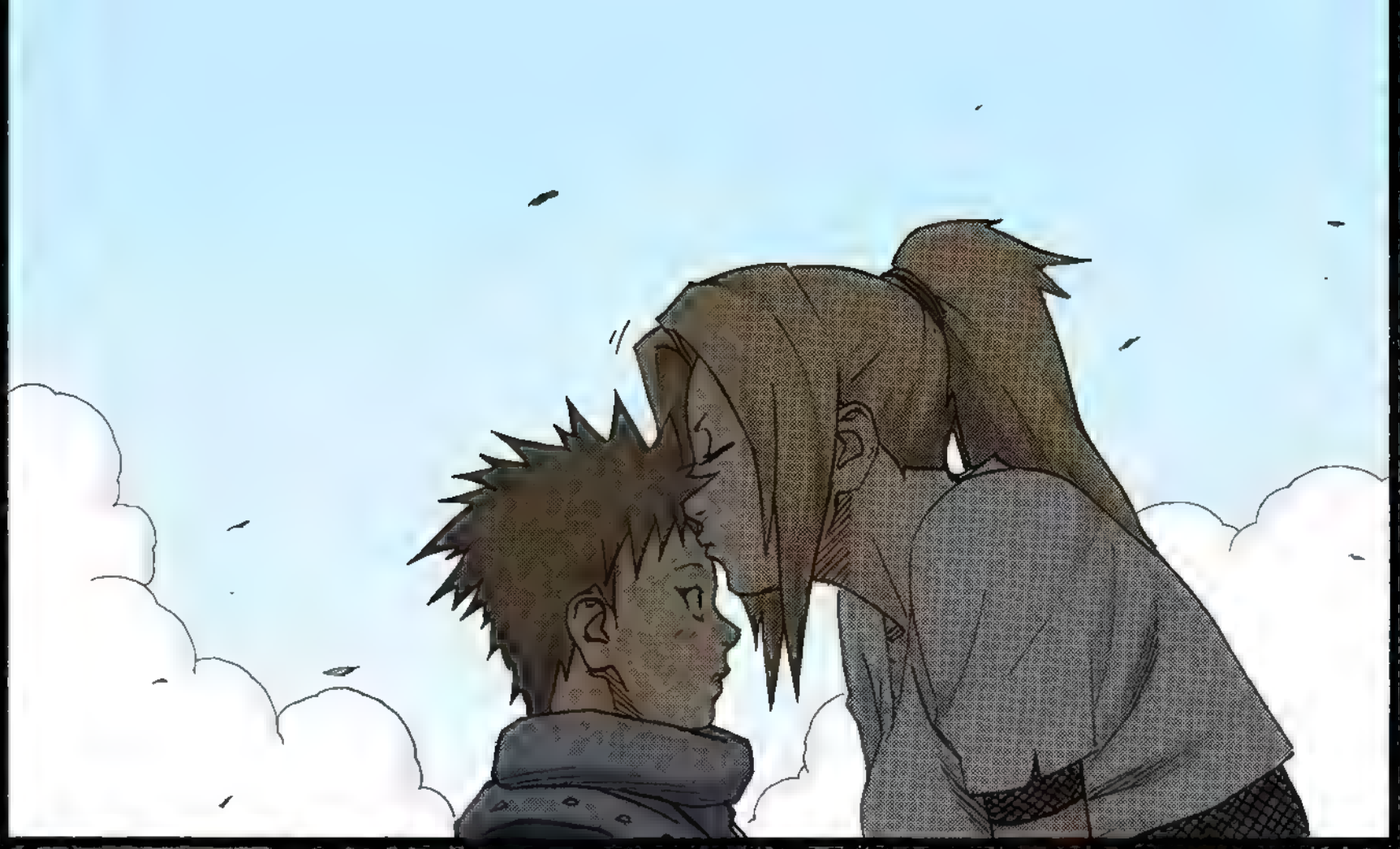
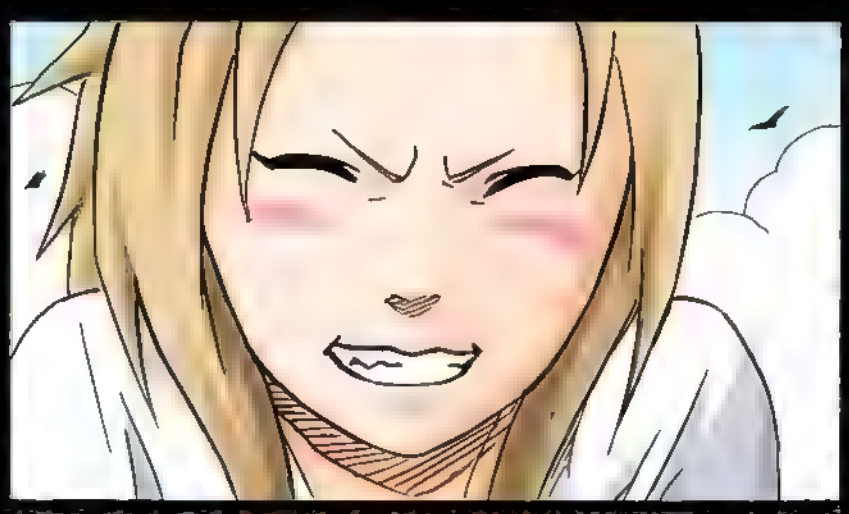
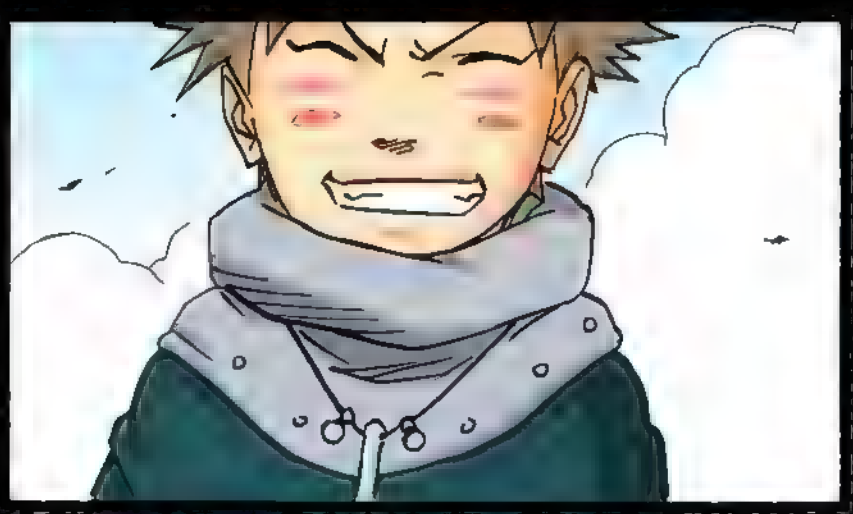
TAKE YOUR HEADBAND OFF, NAWAKI.

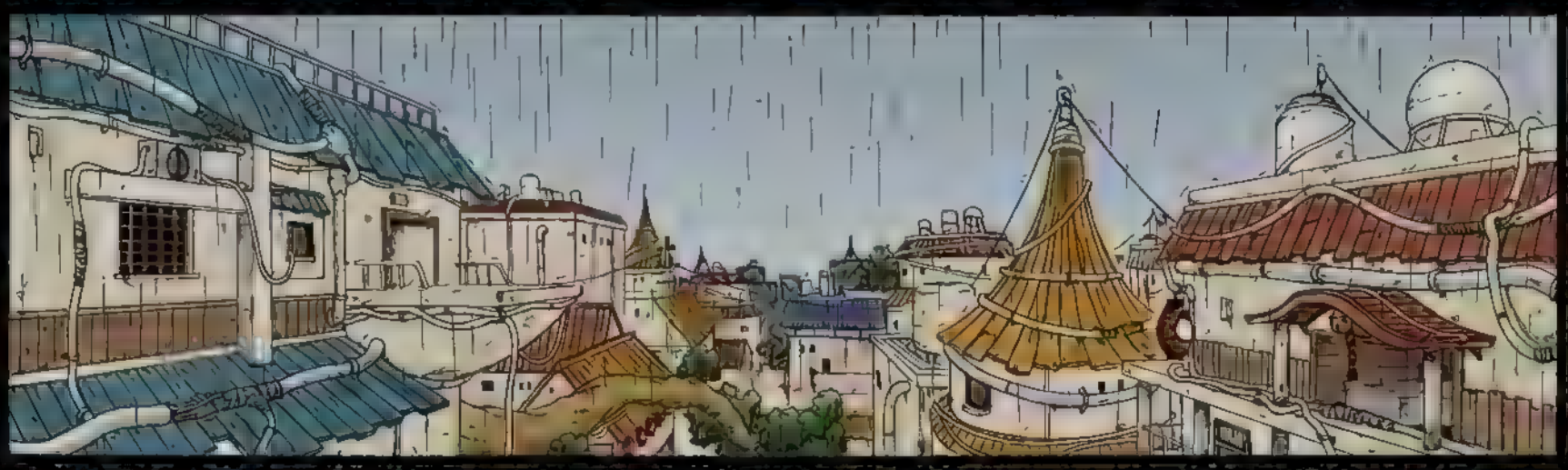
スッ

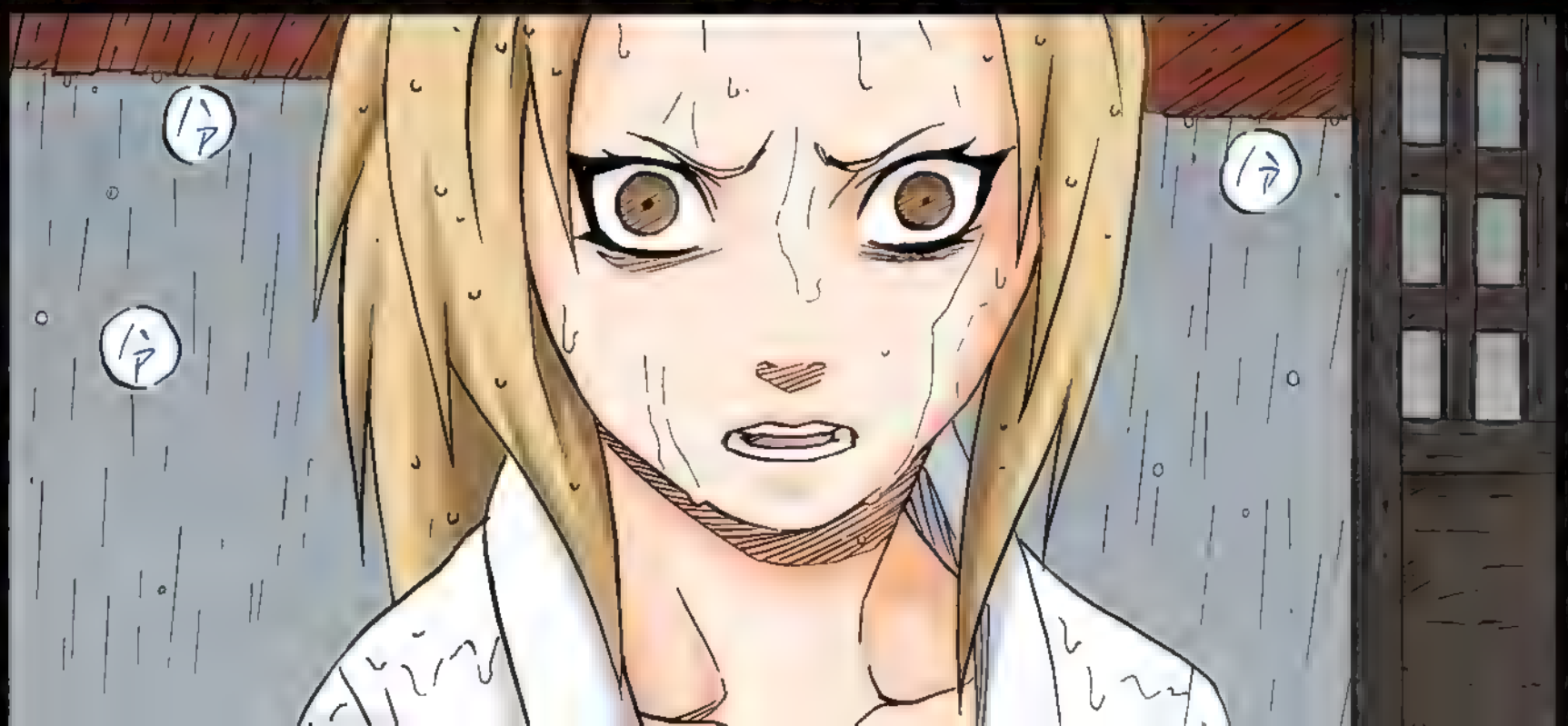
A CHARM TO MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE.

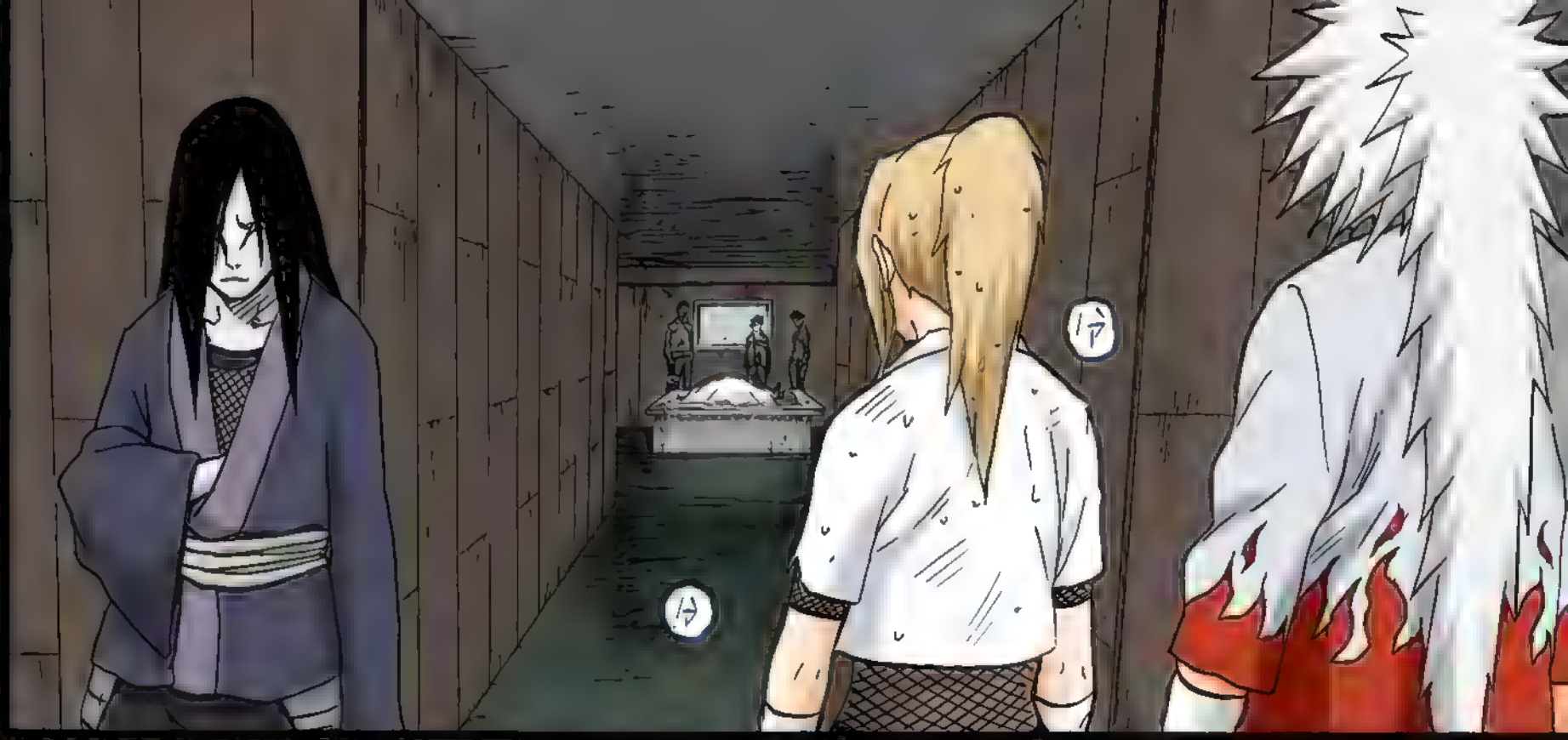


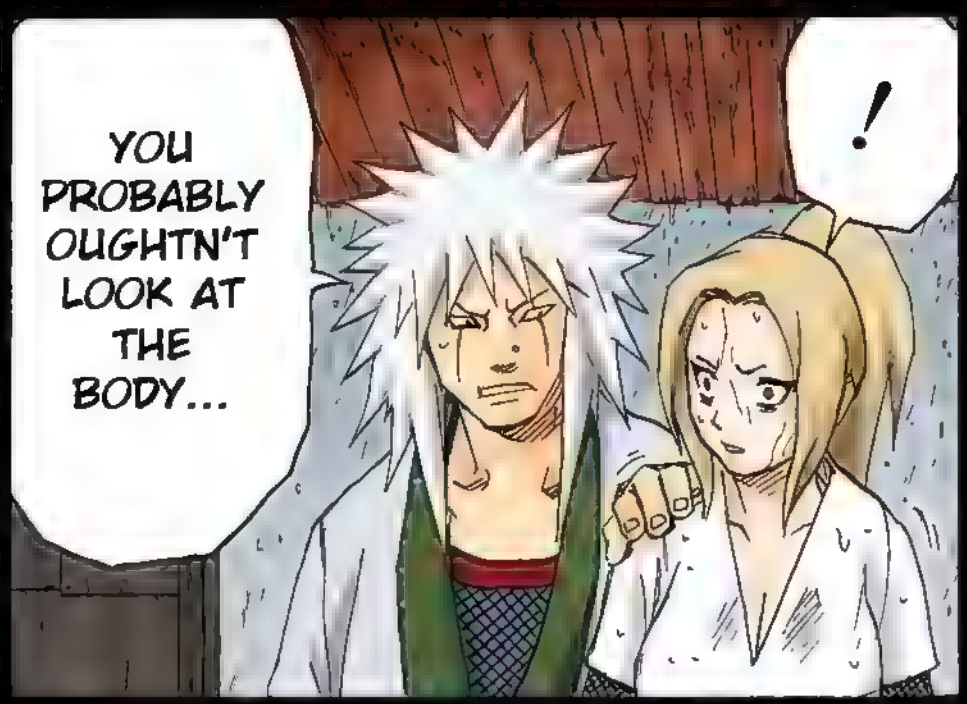











YOU PROBABLY OUGHTN'T LOOK AT THE BODY...
!

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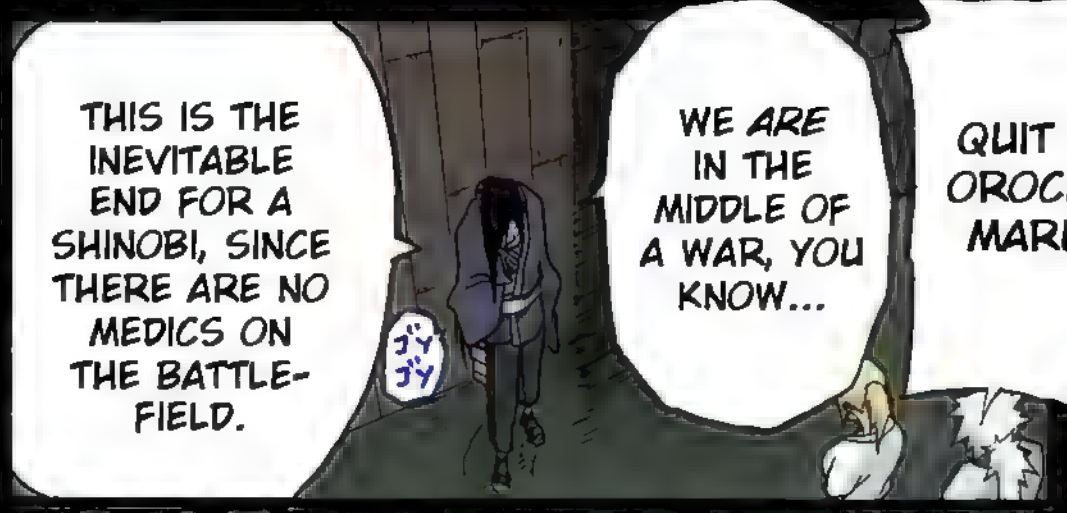
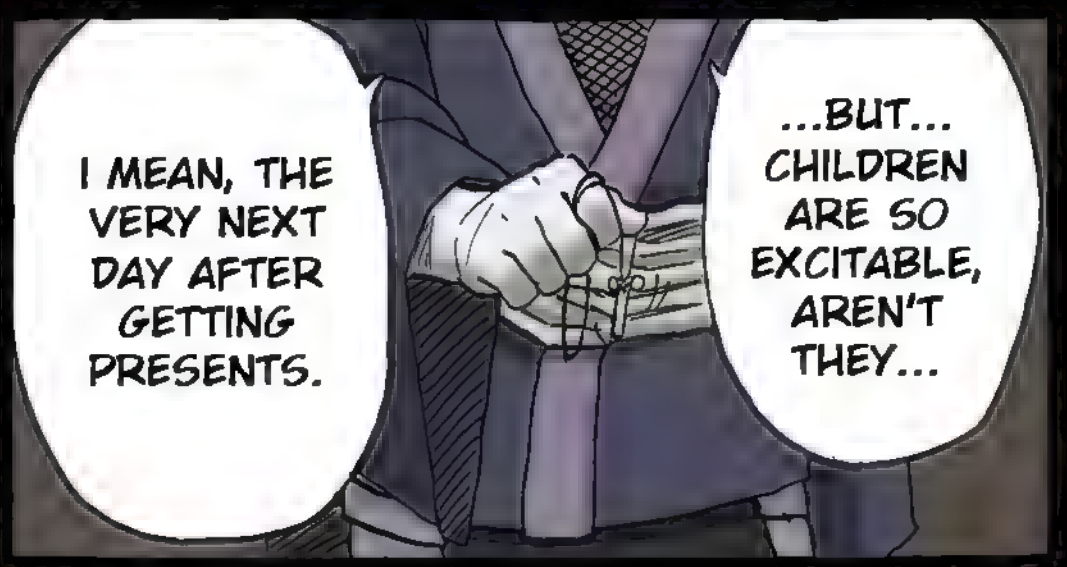

THIS IS THE INEVITABLE END FOR A SHINOBI, SINCE THERE ARE NO MEDICS ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.
ゾゾ
WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR, YOU KNOW...
QUIT IT, OROCHI-MARU!
IT'S NOT LIKE SHE COULD TELL JUST BY...
WHY NOT...?


I MEAN, THE VERY NEXT DAY AFTER GETTING PRESENTS.
...BUT... CHILDREN ARE SO EXCITABLE, AREN'T THEY...

IT'S NOT JUST THE NECKLACE, YOU KNOW!

AND I'M GOING TO DEFEND IT!

THE ENTIRE VILLAGE WAS GRANDPA'S TREASURE!

...EXTENDED TOURS IN ENEMY TERRITORY, ON MISSIONS REQUIRING AUTONOMOUS ACTIVITY...

...FIRST AND FOREMOST, FOR THOSE FOUR-MAN CELLS THAT WILL BE SPENDING...

THUS, I BELIEVE THAT THE CULTIVATING OF MEDIC NINJA POSSESSING ADVANCED MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL NINJUTSU...

...THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A SYSTEM OUGHT TO BE OUR TOP PRIORITY!

...WOULD GREATLY INCREASE BOTH THE MISSION SUCCESS RATE AS WELL AS THE UNIT SURVIVAL RATE.

...I FEEL THAT ASSIGNING A MEDICAL SPECIALIST AS ONE OF THE FOUR UNIT MEMBERS...

THE ENEMY IS *NOT* GOING TO WAIT AROUND FOR US TO...

...BUT WE ARE CURRENTLY IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR...IN ORDER TO ACTUALIZE A MEDICAL INSTITUTION, NOT ONLY DOES IT TAKE TIME, BUT WE LACK TOO MUCH KNOW-HOW AT THE PRESENT TIME AS WELL.

HMM...

FOR SURE, THE NEED IS THERE, AS YOU SAY...

!

I AGREE WITH HER COMPLETELY.

SO WHEN ARE WE EVER GONNA...

HEY, LISTEN UP, GEEZER!

AH!

WE OUGHT TO LEARN SOMETHING FROM THEM.

I DO NOT WANT TO WASTE THE DEATHS OF THOSE SHINOBI WHO HAVE ALREADY SACRAFICED THEIR LIVES.

.....

YOU ARE CORRECT, YOU KNOW.

U...UM... THANKS FOR EARLIER.

!

.....

.....

REALLY? BUT WHERE DO YOU LIVE...?

HUH?

IT'S GETTING LATE... YOU WANT ME TO ESCORT YOU HOME...?

UM...

IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

...NO, REALLY... I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ANYWAY...

THEN DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

.....

THIS MAN... HE'S JUST LIKE ME...

THIS WAS THE STREET I USED TO ALWAYS TAKE ESCORTING MY LITTLE SISTER TO THE ACADEMY.

IT'S MY FAVORITE PATH.

AND BESIDES...

TOMORROW, OUR MISSIONS WILL TAKE US TO THE FRONT LINE...

I LOVE THIS VILLAGE, AND ALL OF MY FRIENDS...

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO DEFEND IT.

IT'S BECAUSE I LIVE IN THE WORLD OF SHINOBI, CONSTANTLY SHADOWED BY DEATH...

THAT I WANT TO STAKE MY LIFE ON PUTTING AN END TO THIS ERA OF CONFLICT.

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO BECOME HOKAGE...

SINCE THE DAY MY LITTLE SISTER DIED...

THIS THOUGHT IS THE ONLY THING THAT'S BEEN KEEPING ME GOING.

...I KNOW...

...ISN'T THE ONLY JOB OF A SHINOBI, YOU KNOW.

TO FIGHT AND LOSE THOSE WE LOVE...

BECAUSE TO BECOME THE PROTECTOR... THE HOKAGE, IS MY DREAM.

DAN...

ギュ!

……!

...ACCEPT THIS...

I WANT YOU TO...

...TSUNADE...

ジュウウウ

DON'T TALK, DAN!

ジュウウウ

...TH...THERE'S STILL...SO MUCH I WANT TO...DO.

ゴボッ ゴボッ

...I D....DON'T.... WANT TO DIE YET....

EVEN WITH ALL OF PRODIGAL THREE TSUNADE'S MEDICAL NINJUTSU ON BOARD, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO RE-FORM AN ENTIRE ORGAN...

HIS KIDNEY'S BEEN COMPLETELY BLOWN TO BITS... IT'S NO USE...

...REALLY...? OH, GOOD...

...YOU'RE IN THE CLEAR NOW... YOU'LL HEAL, DAN!

DON'T WORRY, I'VE STOPPED THE BLEEDING!

...I...CAN'T AFFORD...TO DIE...HERE...

ドガン

ドガン

ジュウウ

UGH ...!

UNH...

ジュウウウウ

.....

ENOUGH, HE'S DEAD ALREADY!

I SAID, STOP IT...!!

STOP!

STOP!

STOP!

STOP IT...!

STOP IT... STOP SPURT-ING...!

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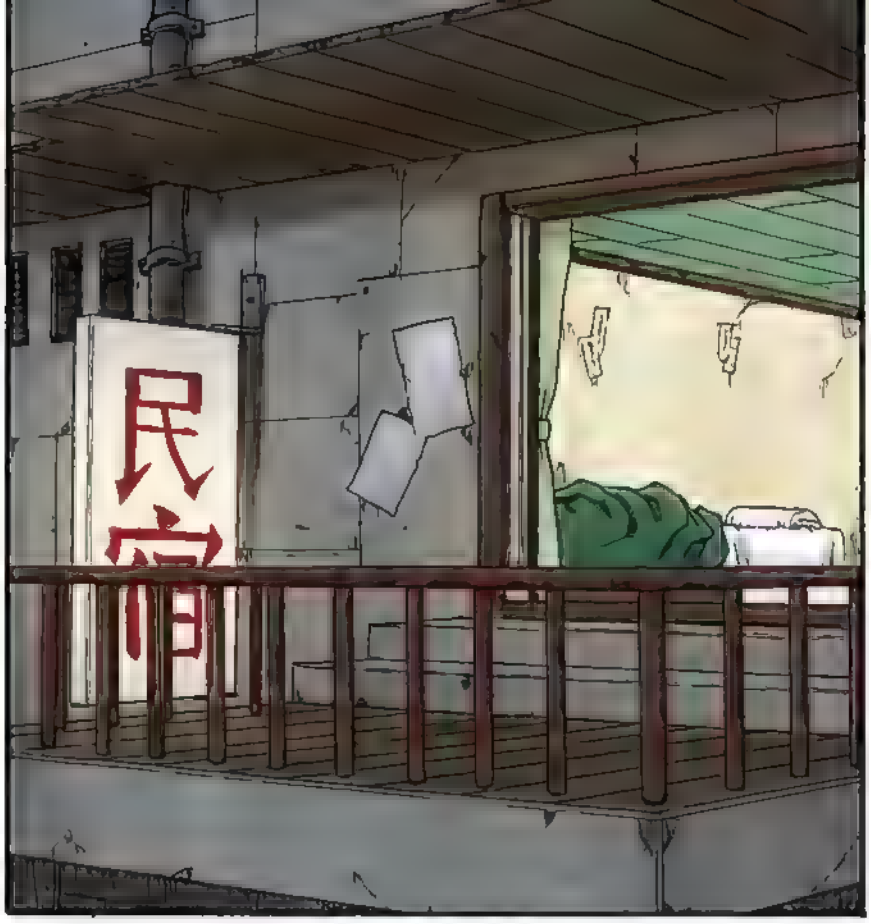
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!?
NARUTO ...?

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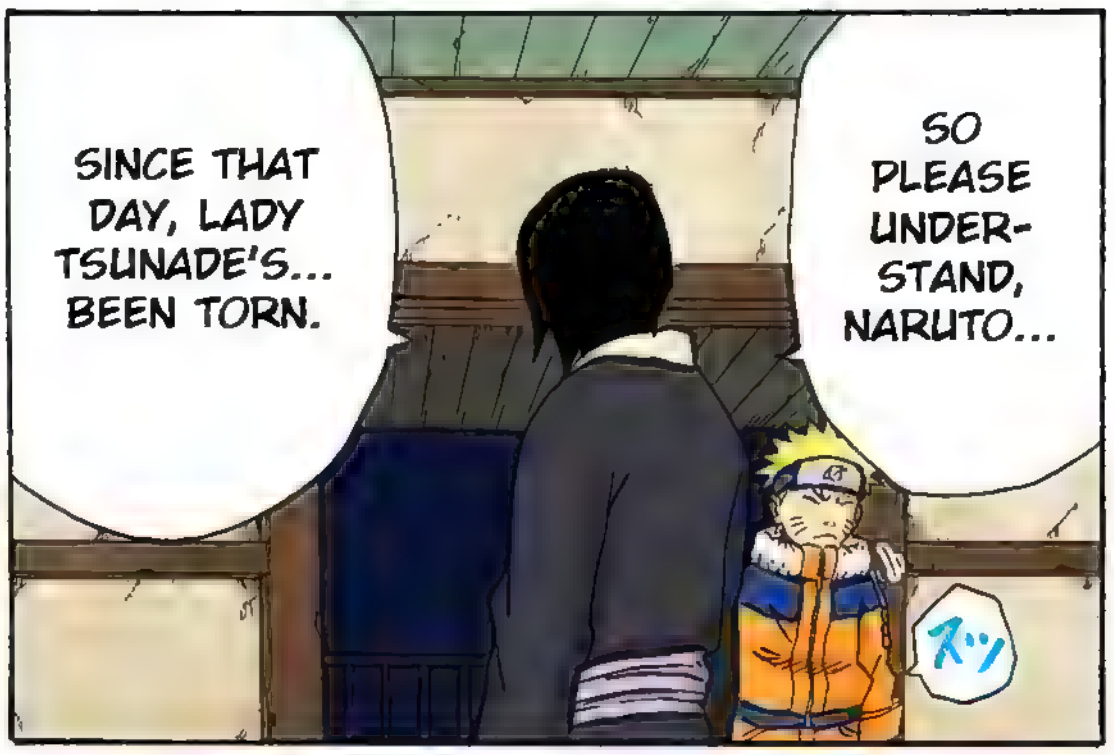
SINCE THAT DAY, LADY TSUNADE'S... BEEN TORN.
SO PLEASE UNDER-STAND, NARUTO...
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...TRAIN!
I'M GONNA GO...

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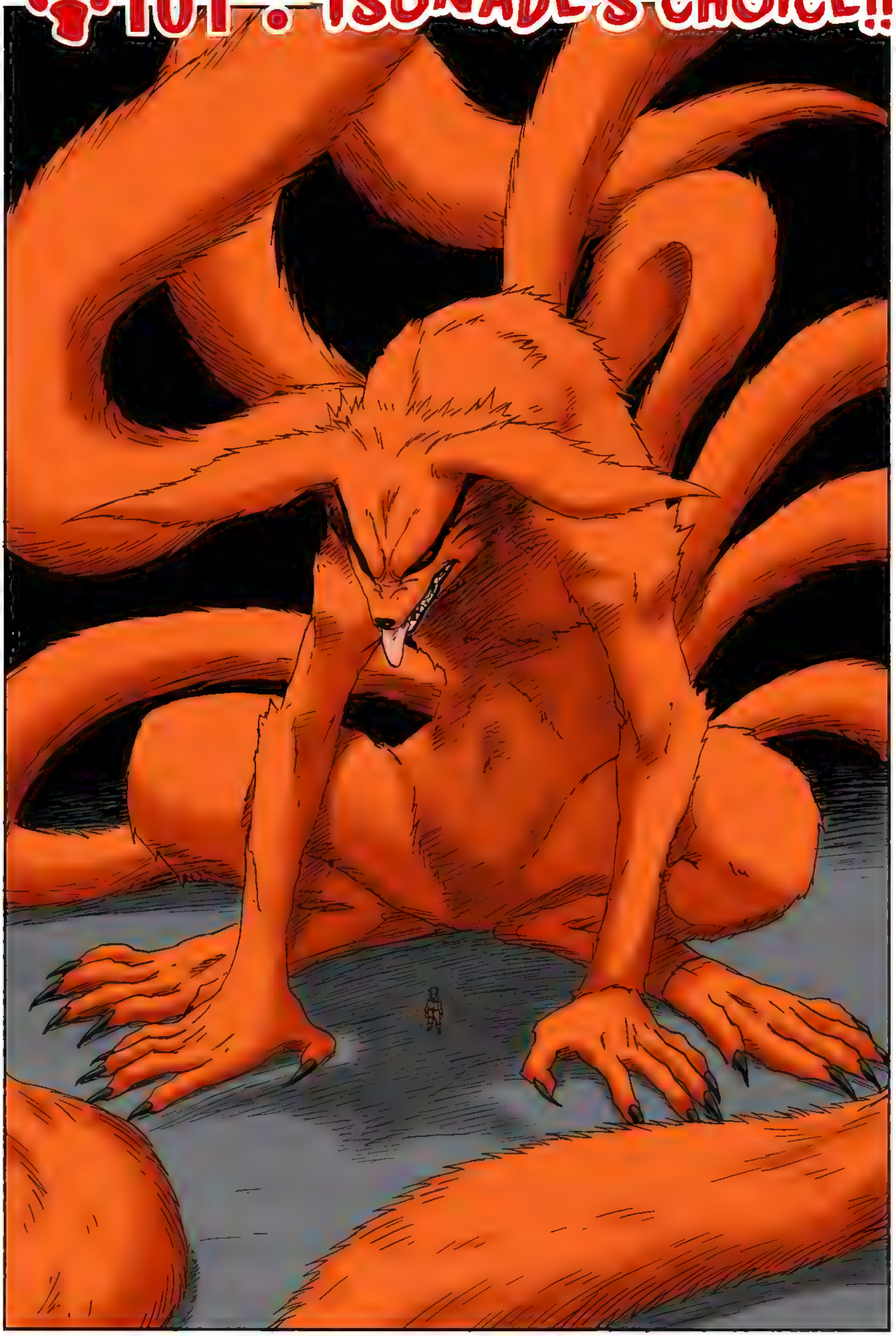
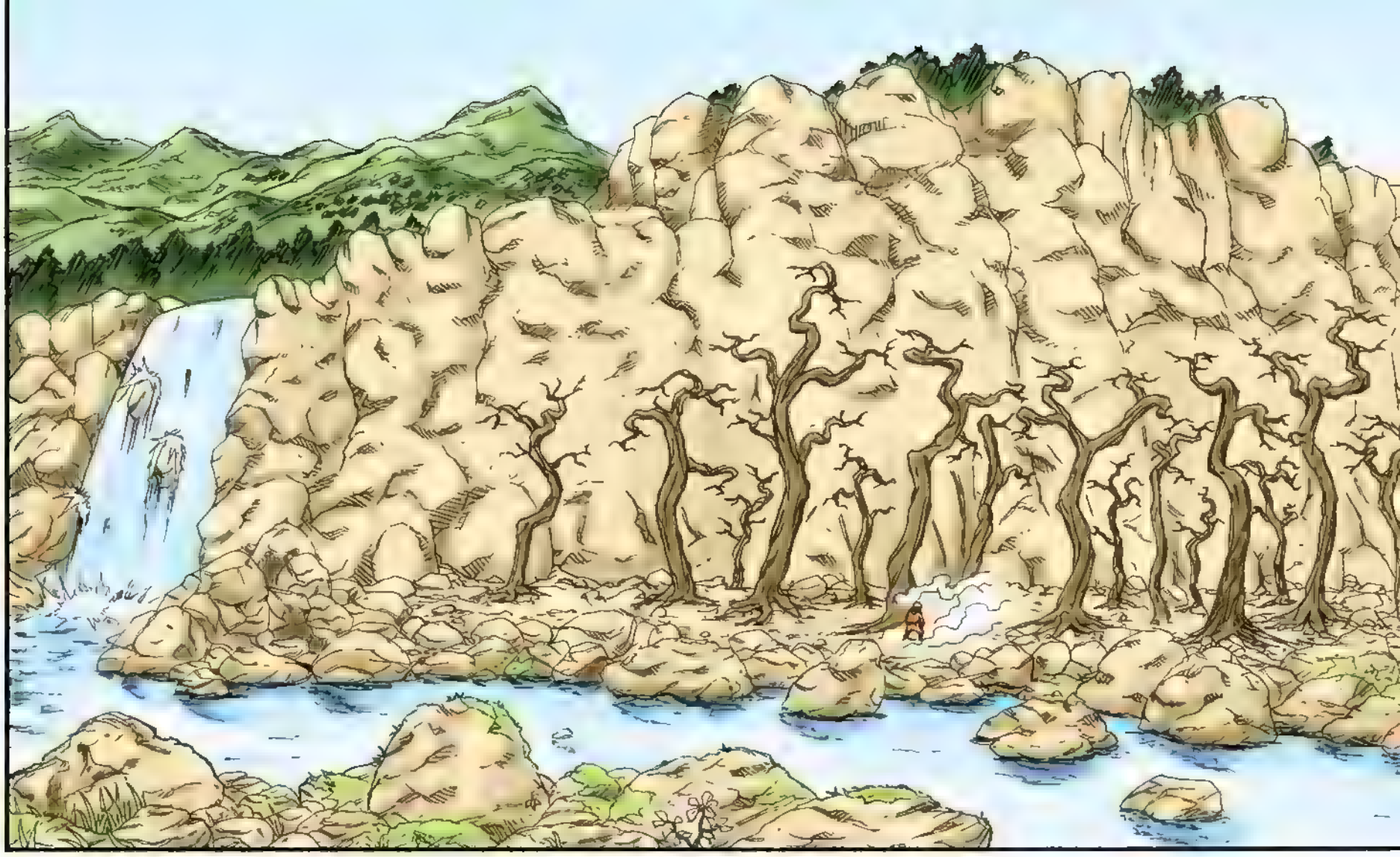
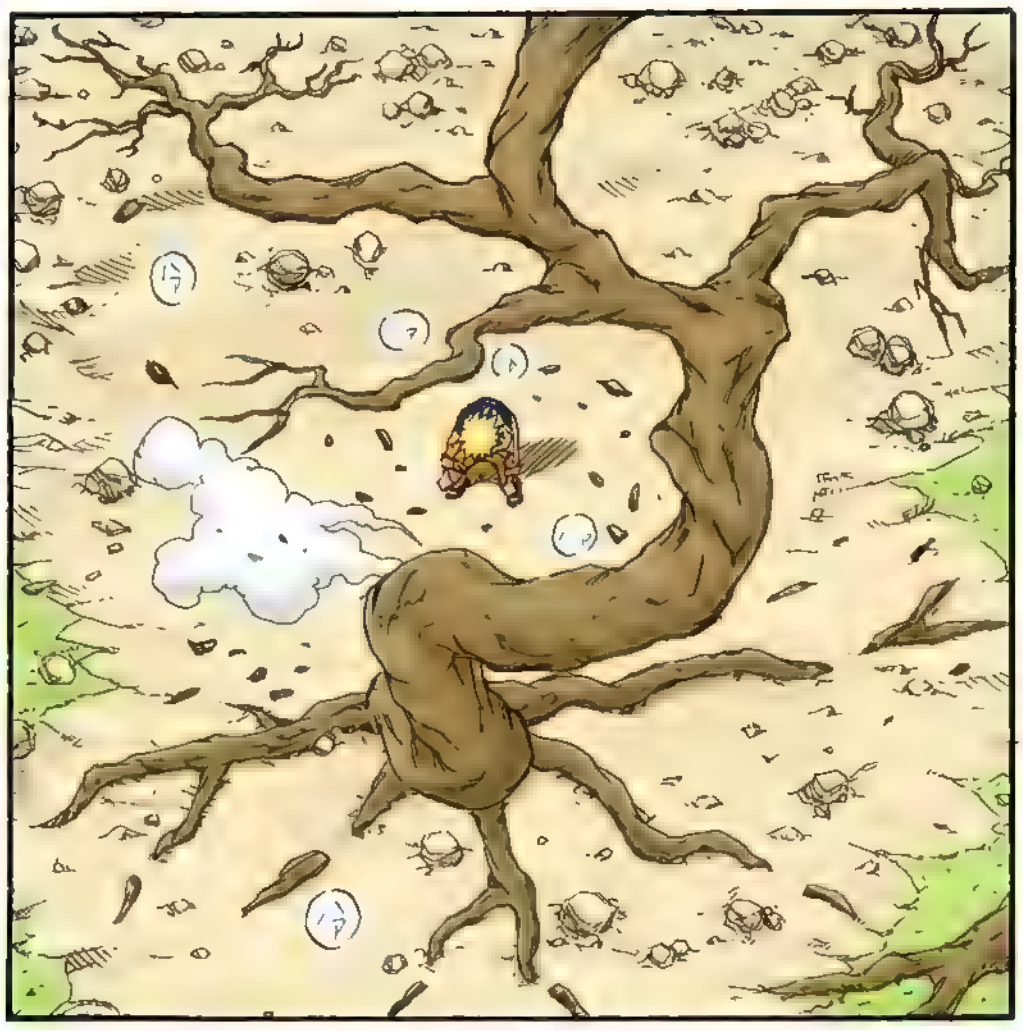
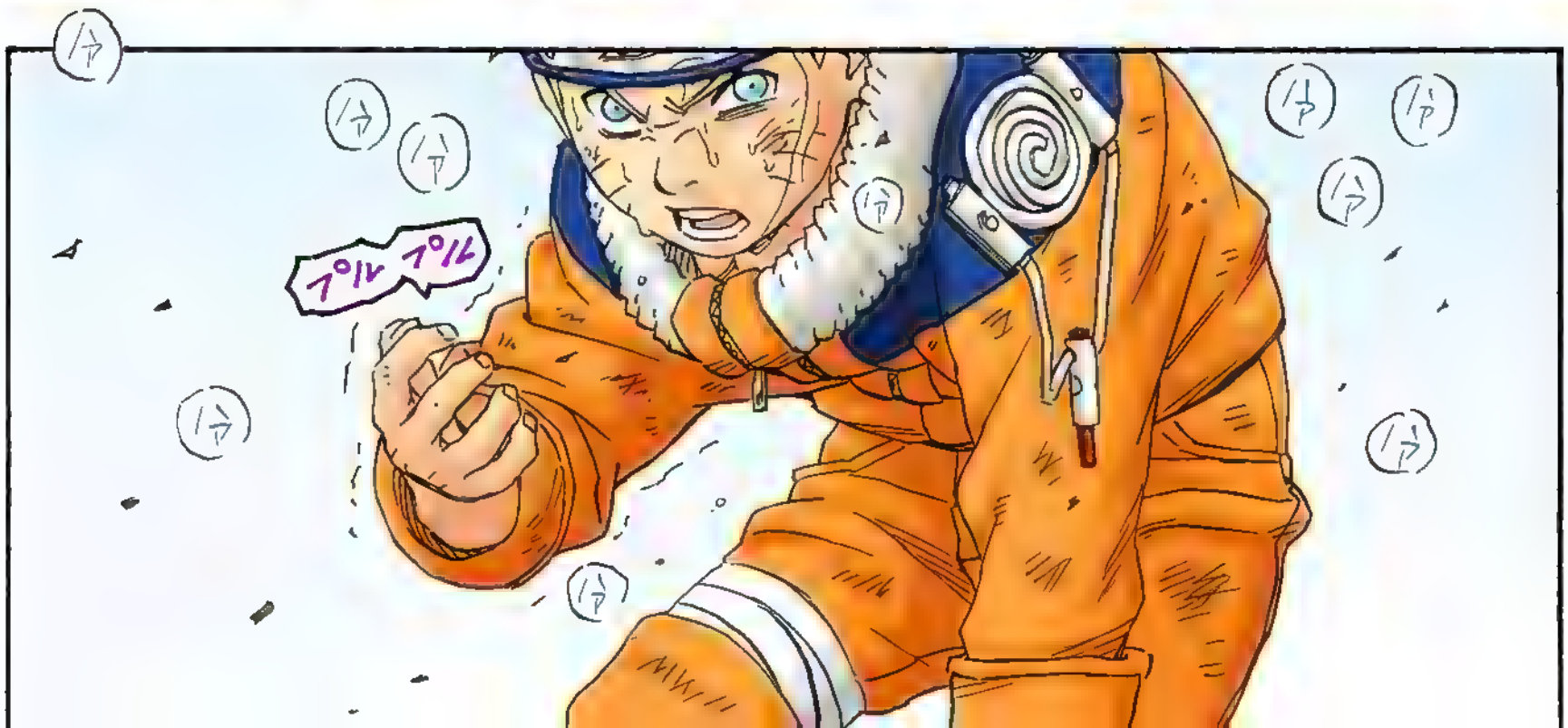
161 : TSUNADE'S CHOICE!!





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THAT TSUNADE... I FEEL ROTTEN!

イテテ

YAAWW... OWW, MY HEAD...

民宿

THAT NARUTO... IT SEEMS HE NEVER CAME BACK LAST NIGHT, HUH...

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……

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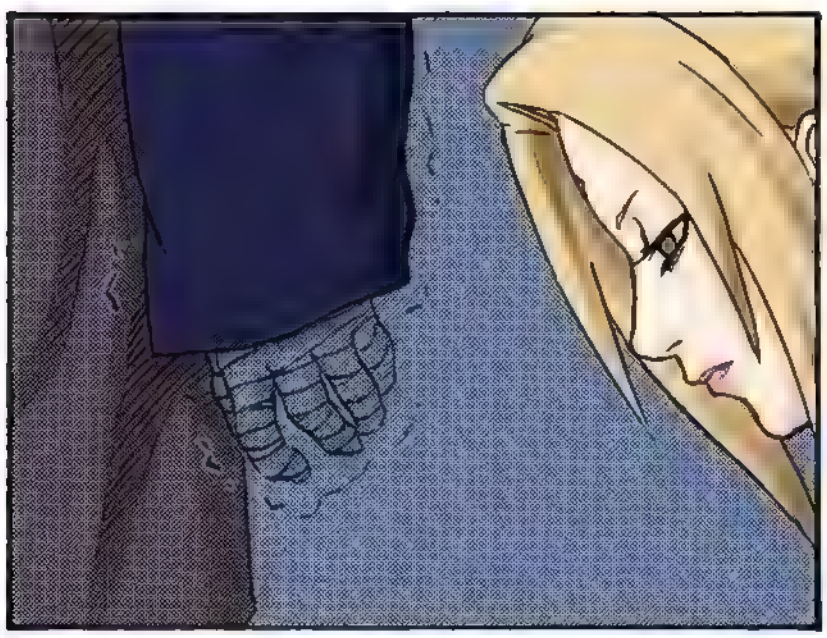
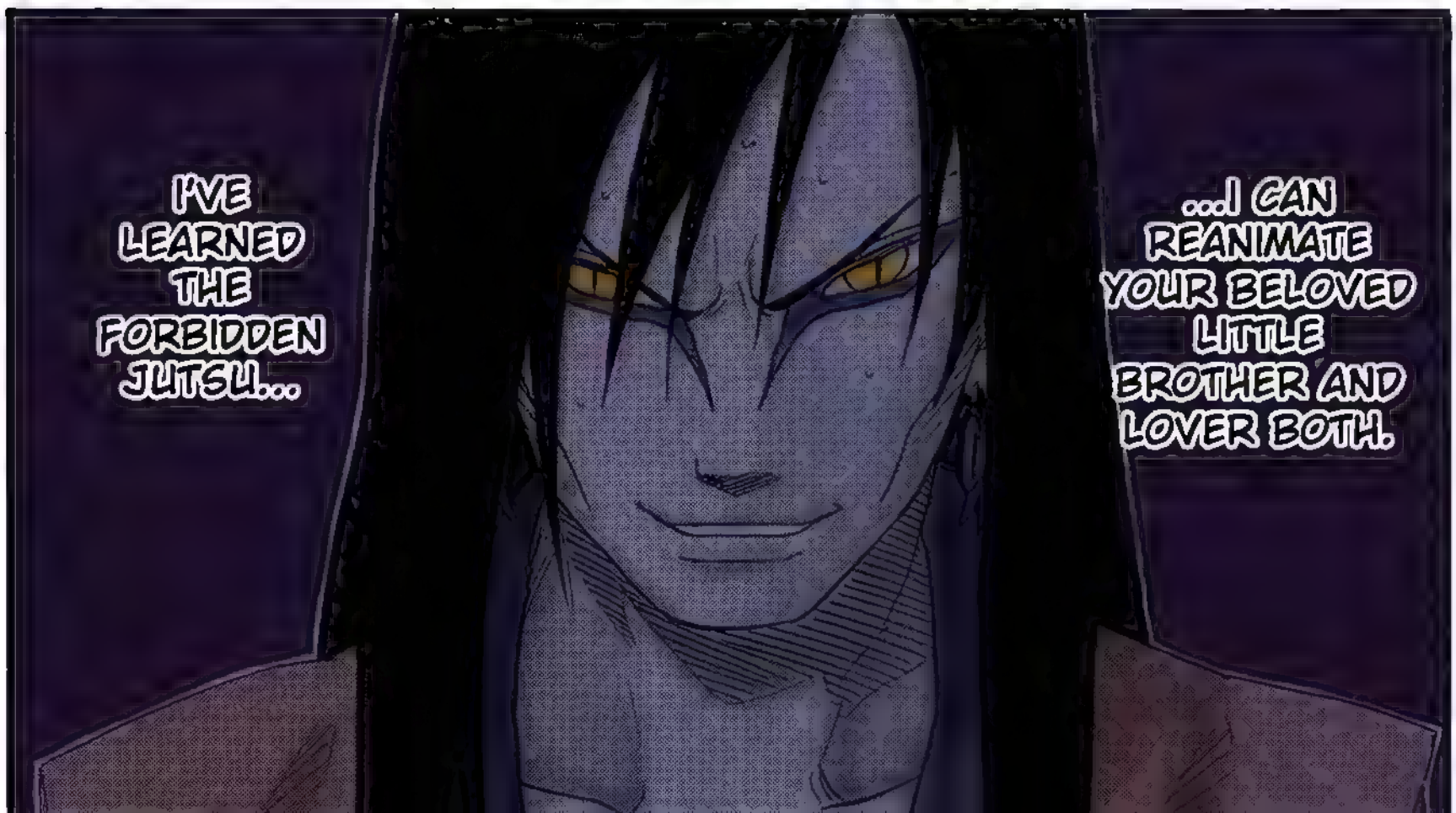
……

HE'S SUCH... A FOOL.



WON'T YOU CONSIDER... OUR OFFER?


I'VE LEARNED THE FORBIDDEN JUTSU...
...I CAN REANIMATE YOUR BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER AND LOVER BOTH.

DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE THEM AGAIN, TSUNADE...?

...SUPPOSE I FIX THOSE ARMS...WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

ジャラ

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HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THEIR WISHES... OR EVEN YOUR WISH... YOUR DREAM, LADY TSUNADE?!

NO! YOU MUSTN'T BE TAKEN IN BY THEIR SWEET TALK...!

THIS TIME I ANNIHILATE KONOHA ONCE AND FOR ALL.

...THE VILLAGE REQUESTS THAT YOU ACCEPT THE TITLE OF FIFTH HOKAGE.

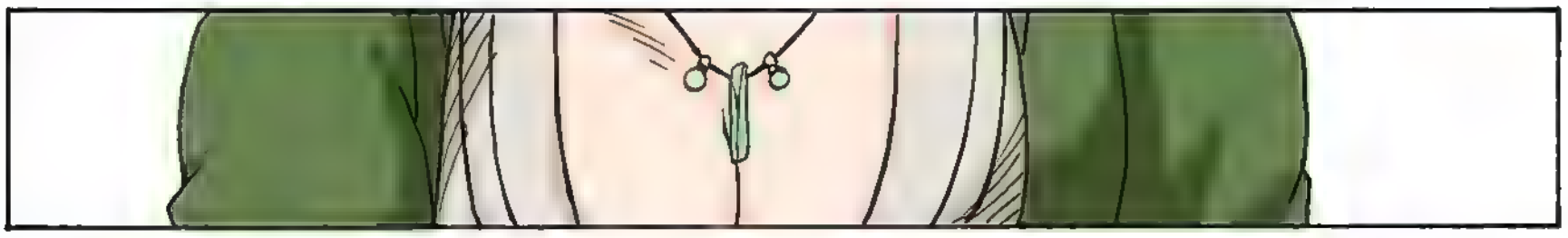
I'LL LAY IT STRAIGHT, TSUNADE...

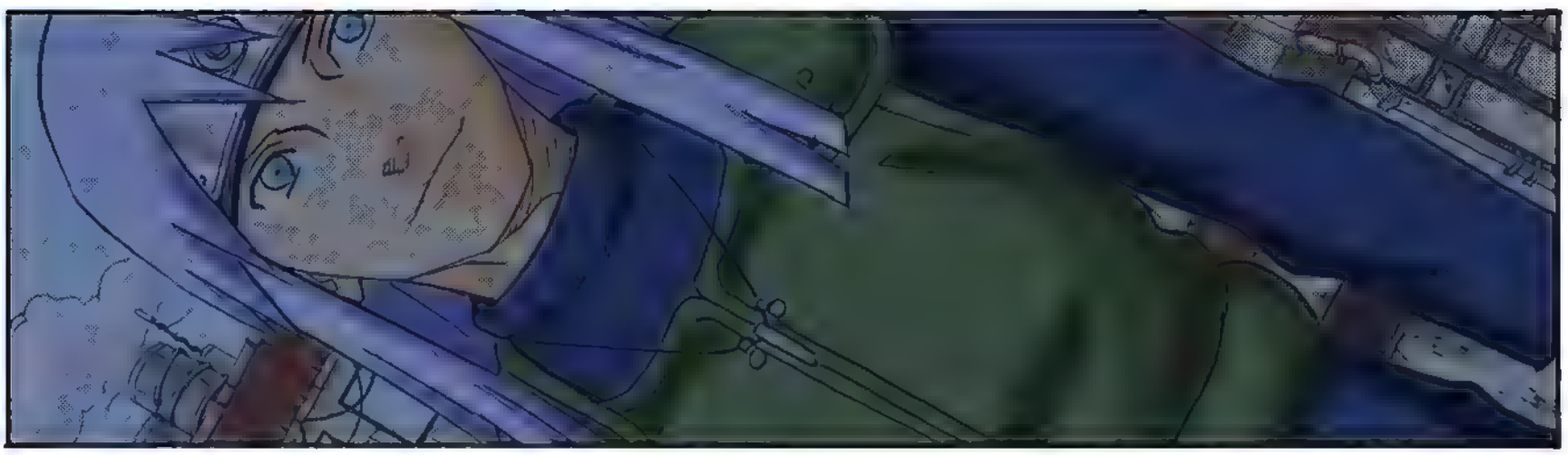
.....

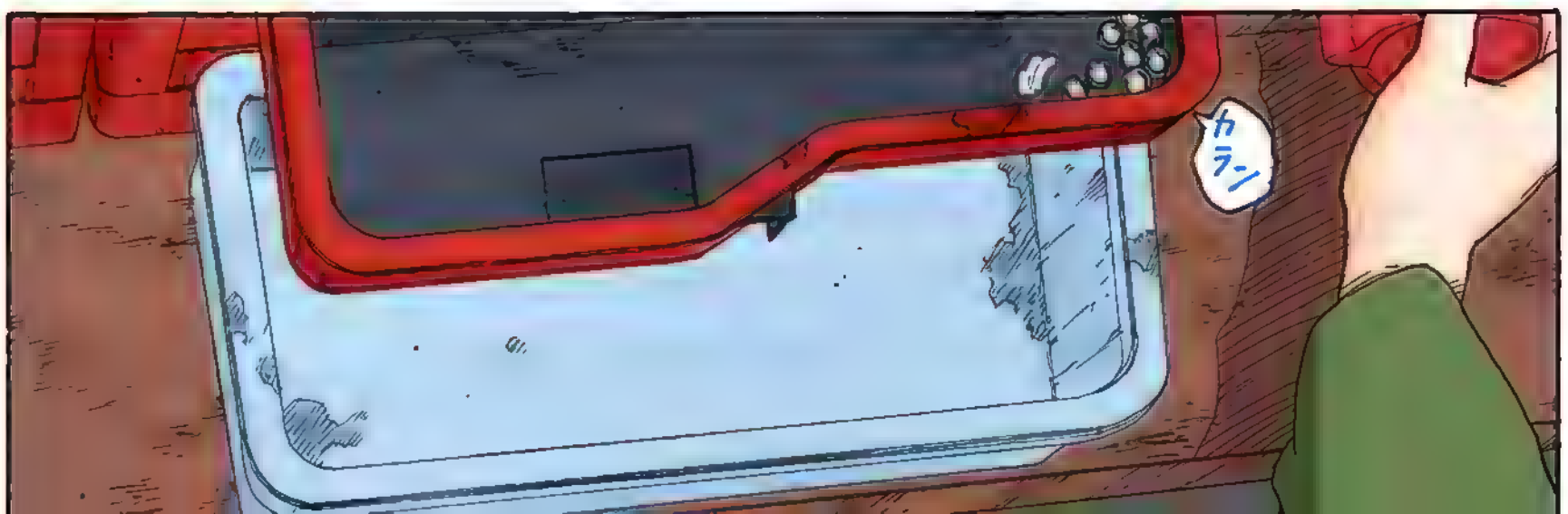
...THAT WAS THE DREAM THEY FOUGHT FOR!

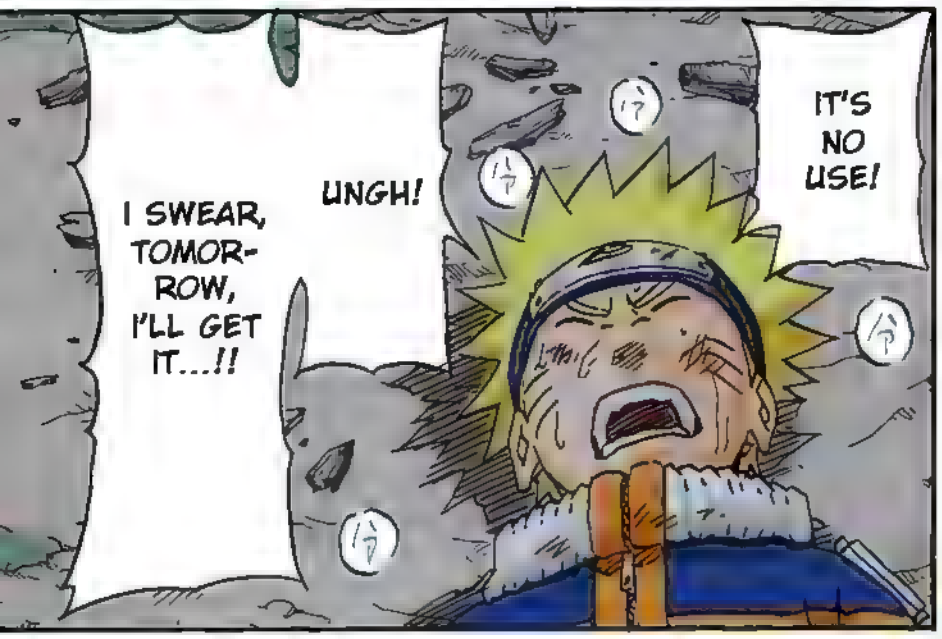
...THEY WANTED AN END TO TURBULENT DAYS AND TO SEE THE VILLAGE PROSPER. IT WAS THOSE IDEALS...

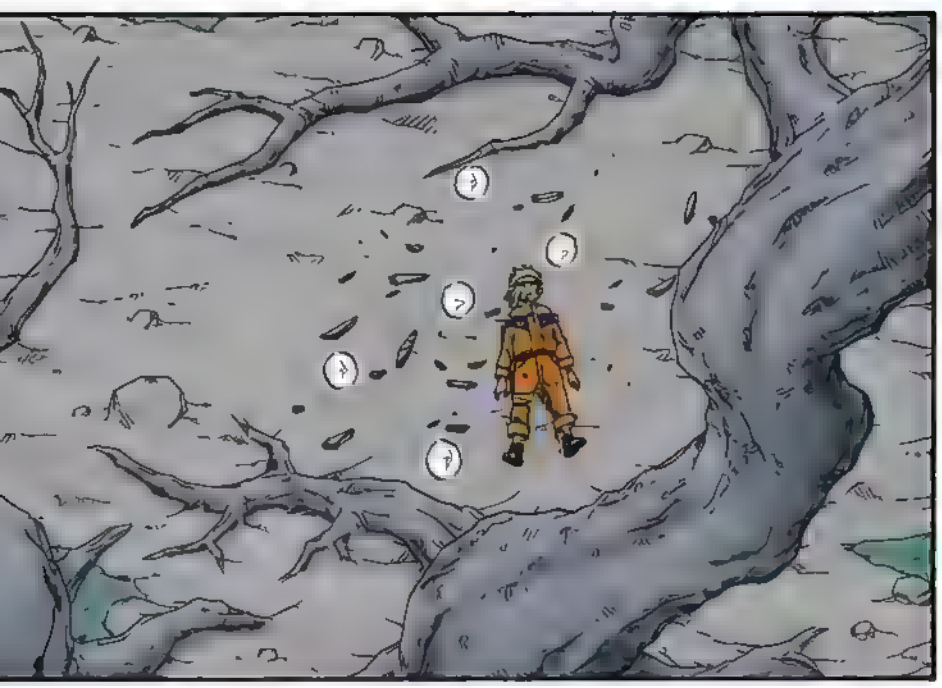
EVERY ONE OF THE PREVIOUS HOKAGE RISKED THEIR LIVES TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE OF KONOHA AND ALL THOSE WHO LIVE THERE...

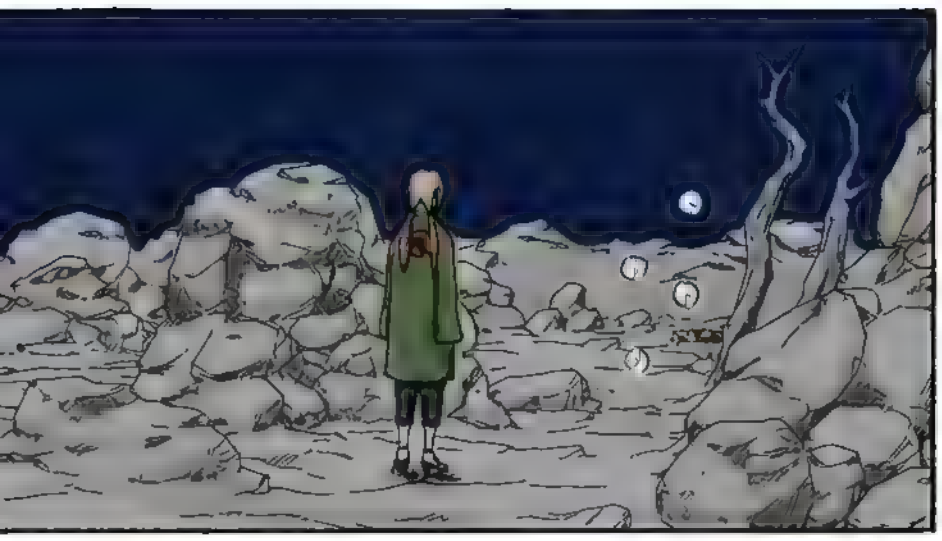




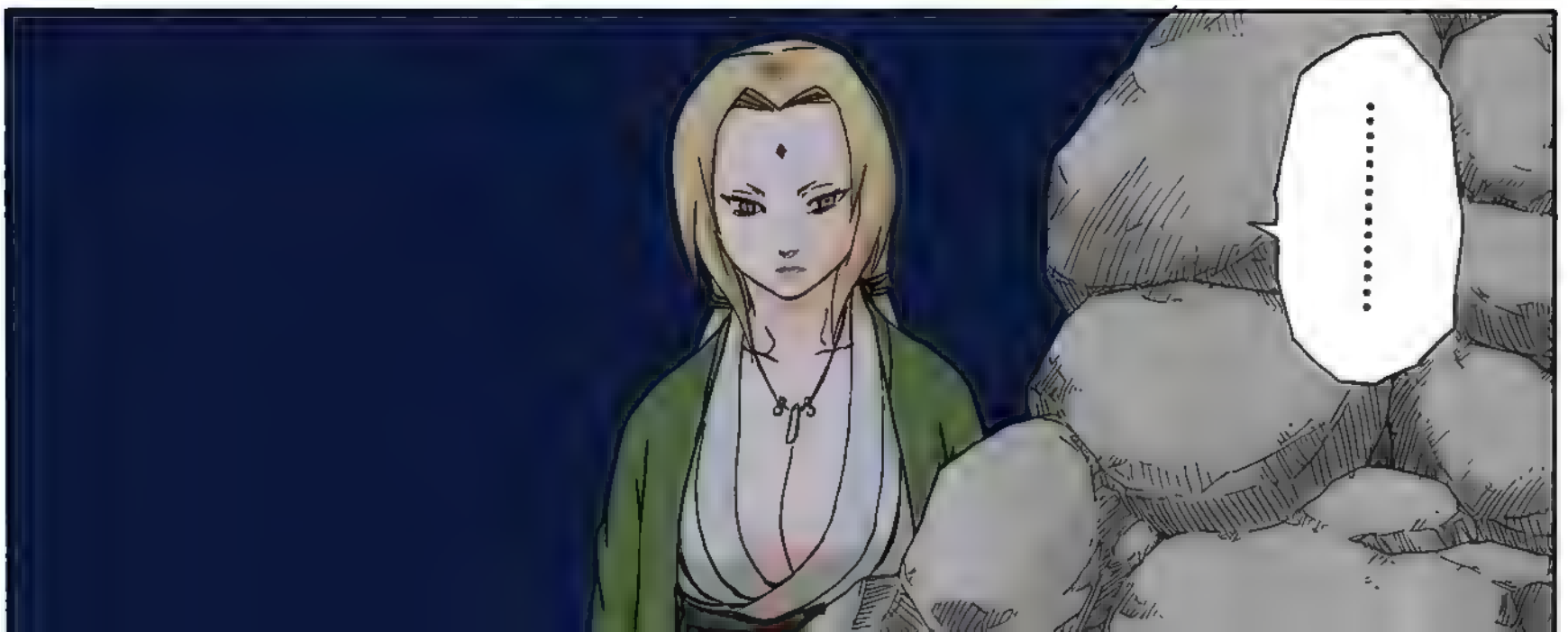



I SWEAR, TOMOR-ROW, I'LL GET IT...!!
UNGH!
IT'S NO USE!



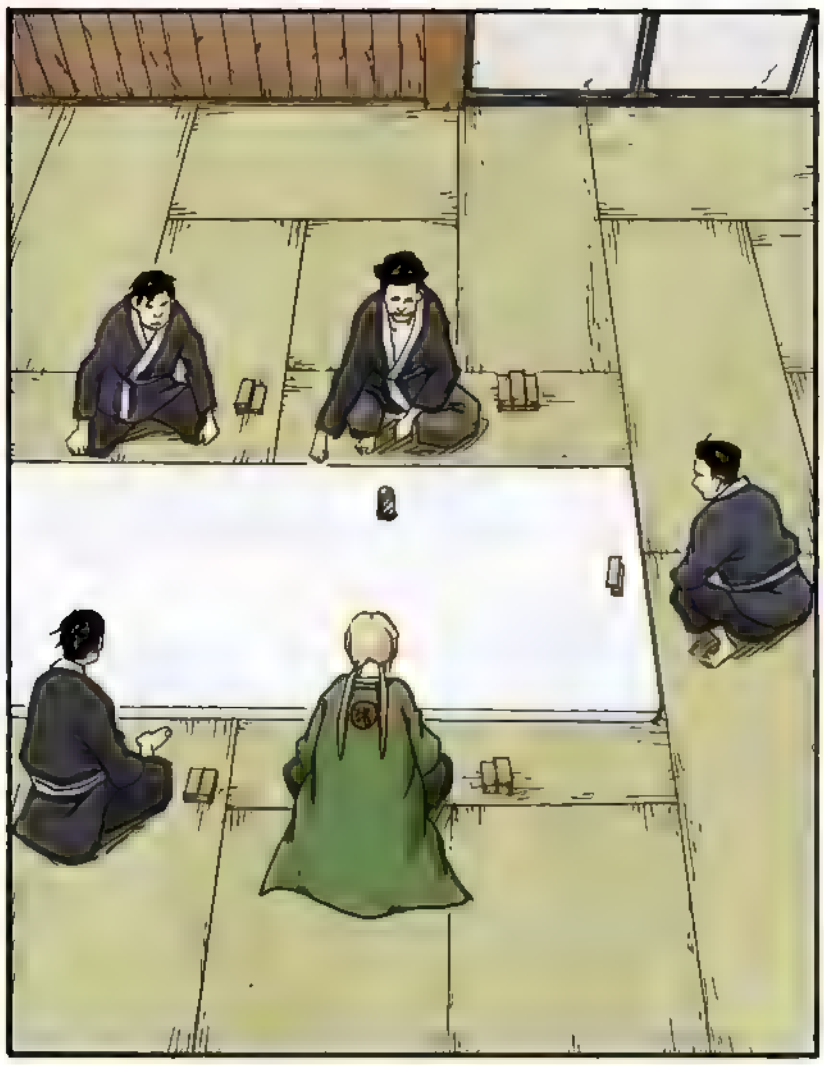


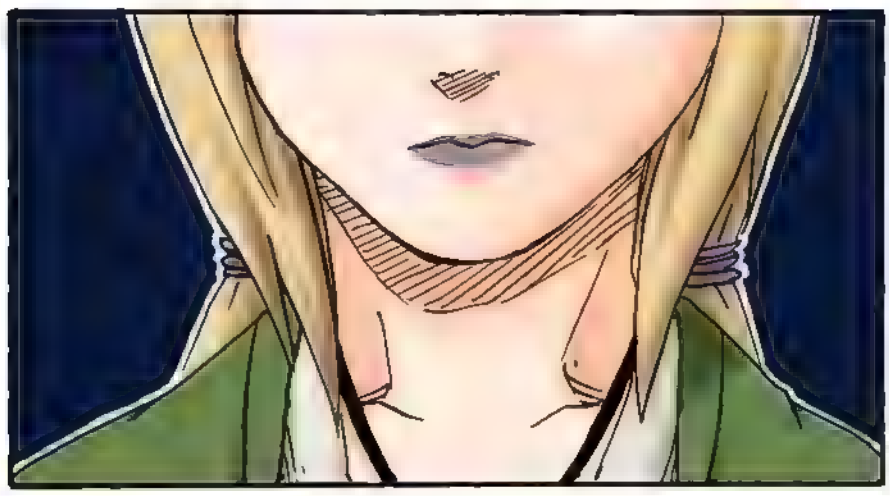
THE SECOND NIGHT AFTER THE WAGER WITH TSUNADE...

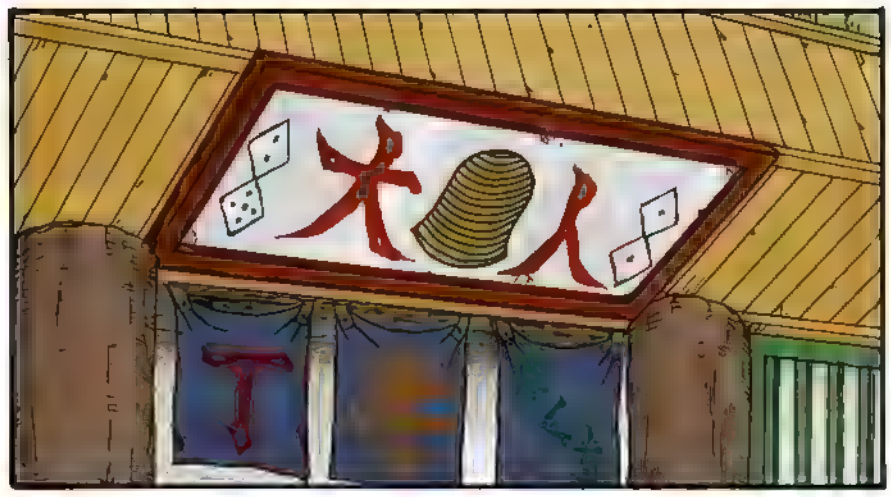

.....

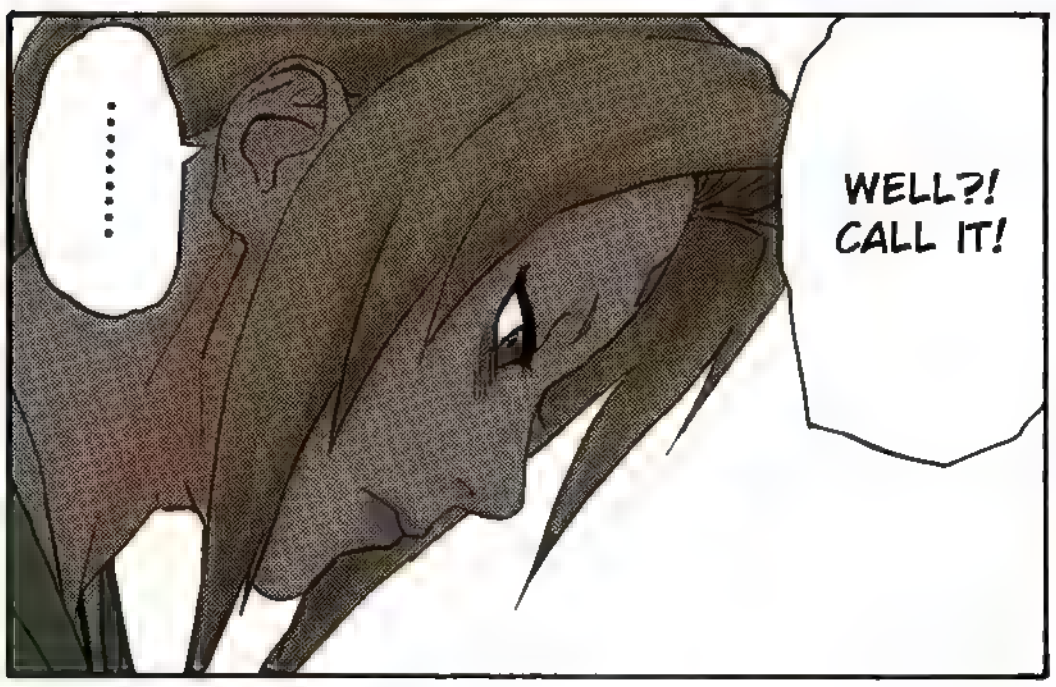
...ON AND JUST SO YOU KNOW, THIS FORBIDDEN JUTSU REQUIRES LIVE SACRAFICES... SO PLEASE HAVE TWO PEOPLE PREPARED ON YOUR END...

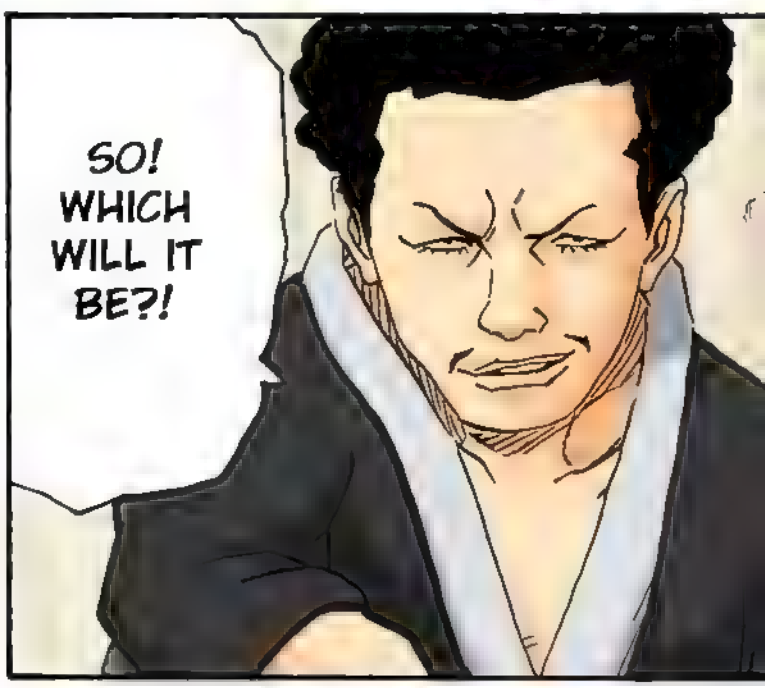
...YOU NEED NOT GIVE US YOUR ANSWER THIS VERY MINUTE... HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE A RESPONSE IN ONE WEEK'S TIME.











HOWEVER... IF SHE SHOULD DECLINE...

IF SHE ACQUIESCES TO OUR TERMS, THEN YOUR ARMS WILL BE HEALED AND YOU CAN RESUME OPERATION DESTORY KONOHA IMMEDIATELY, LORD OROCHIMARU...

PLUS, SHE WILL BE REUNITED WITH THE TWO PEOPLE SHE LOVES MOST.

I WONDER WHICH IT WILL BE...

...I'LL MAKE HER FIX MY ARMS...

..EVEN IF BY FORCE...

...I'M NOT WORRIED...

...HUMPH...

DO YOU THINK IT'LL GO SO EASILY...?

I'VE GOT YOU...

MAKE NO MISTAKE, SHE WILL SWALLOW OUR TERMS.

YOU CAN COUNT ON IT...

I KNOW HER BETTER THAN SHE KNOWS HERSELF...!

I ALSO KNOW HER GREATEST WEAKNESS.

AND SO...THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY...

HAH!

IN SHORT, WHILE YOU MAXIMIZE YOUR CHAKRA'S ROTATION AND POWER, YOU FORM AN ADDITIONAL MEMBRANE ON THE INSIDE OF THE BALLOON AND VISUALIZE COMPRESSING THE CHAKRA WITHIN.

SO YOU SEE, IN THIS THIRD STATE, YOU PUT OUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED SO FAR FULL FORCE, AND THEN... CONTAIN IT!

I UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF IT IN MY MIND...

...BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO COMPRESS MY FULL CHAKRA AND CONTAIN IT IN THE SHAPE OF A PERFECT SPHERE...

スッ

AHHH!

...THAT'S PRETTY CRUEL. THAT'S HOW DREAMY-EYED BRATS GET STARTED ON THE WHOLE I'M GOING TO BECOME HOKAGE FARCE!

PLAYING MIGHTY MENTOR BY TEACHING HIM JUTSU HE HAS NO HOPE OF MASTERING?

URGH!

ストン

ROOOOOOAR!!!

...TO-MORROW'S THE DAY, HUH...

もちや

.....

...HE MUST HAVE OFFERED SOME-THING HUGE...

FROM THE DEGREE OF TSUNADE'S AGITATION...

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE ONE WEEK THAT'S GNAWING AT ME...

THE SIXTH NIGHT...

PERHAPS I SHOULD LEAN ON TSUNADE ONE MORE TIME...

.....

NARUTO'S BARELY BEEN BACK AT THE INN THIS WHOLE TIME.

IT'S USELESS... BUY WHY...?

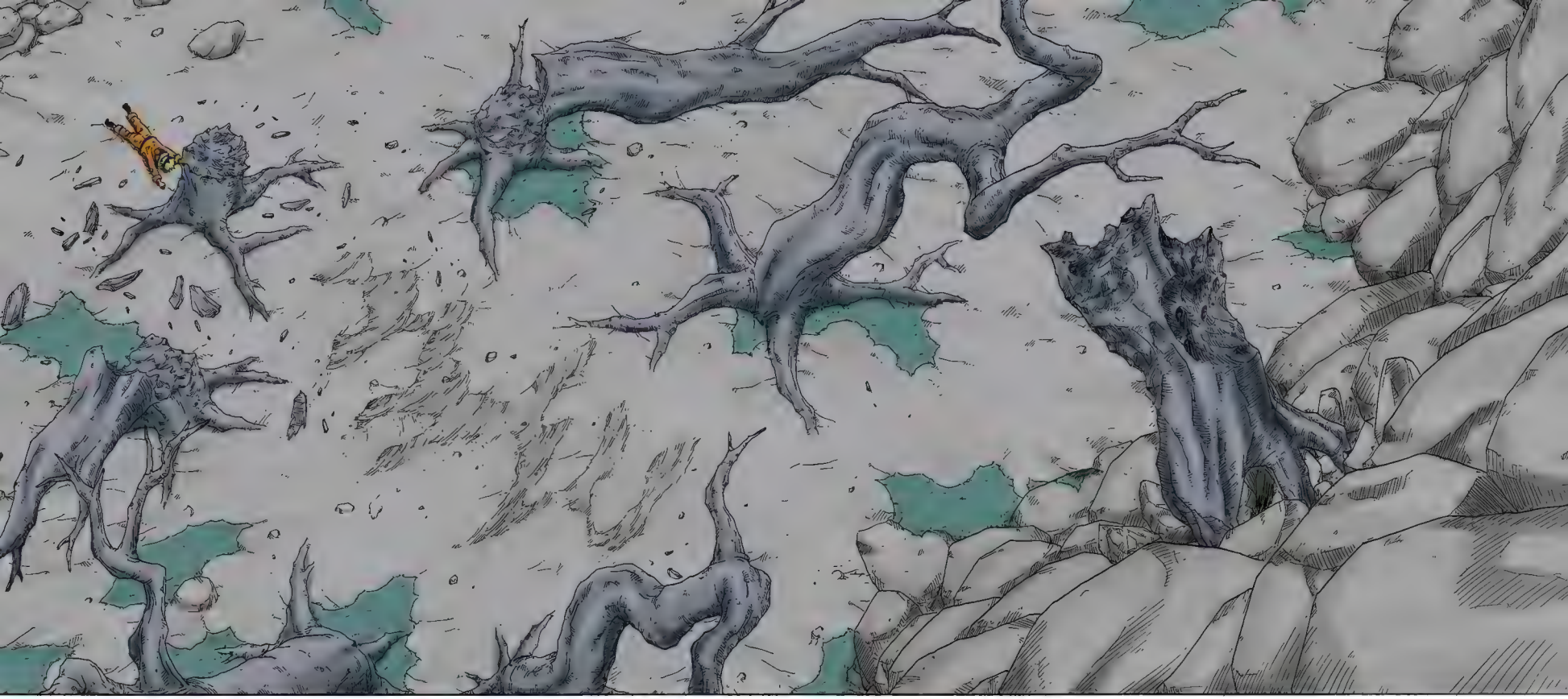
.....

!

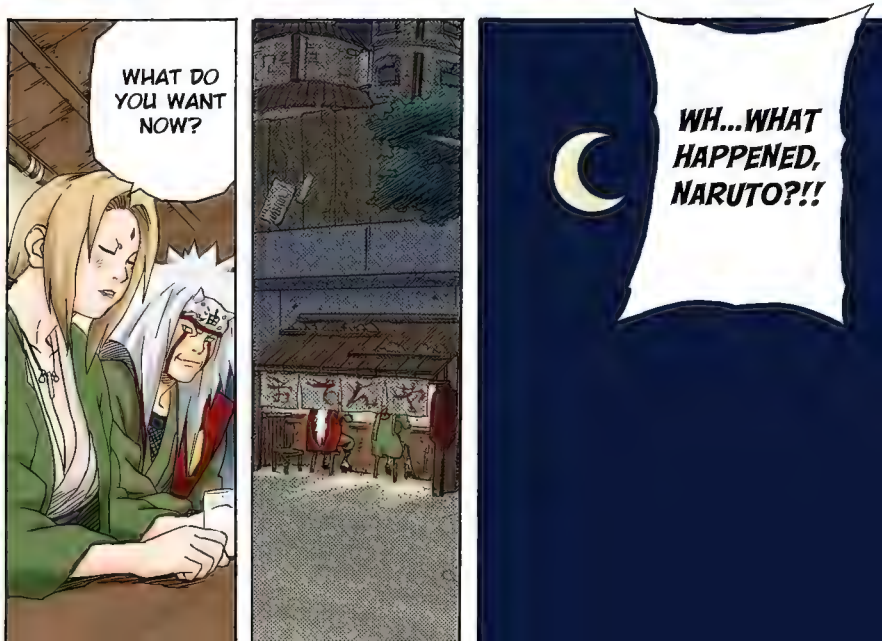
AT THIS RATE, I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE IT...

I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME...

WH... WHAT THE...?!



I WONDER HOW NARUTO'S BEEN FARING...?
.....
...TO-MORROW'S THE PROMISED SEVENTH DAY OF YOUR WAGER WITH NARUTO...


WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW?
WH...WHAT HAPPENED, NARUTO?!!

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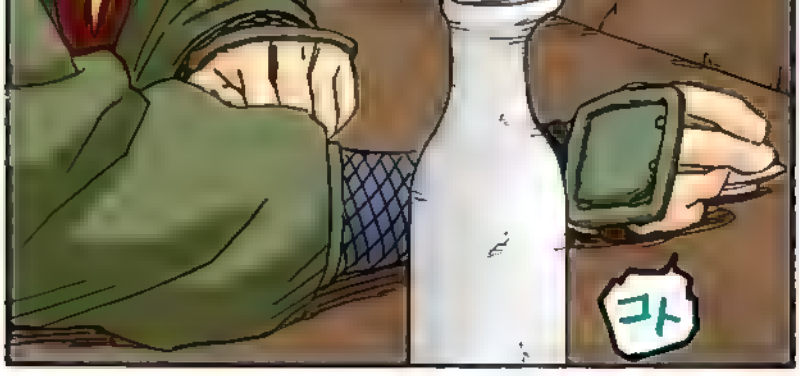
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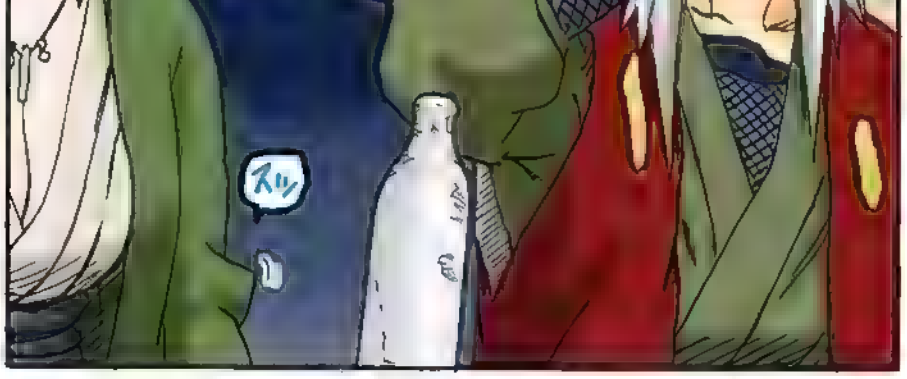
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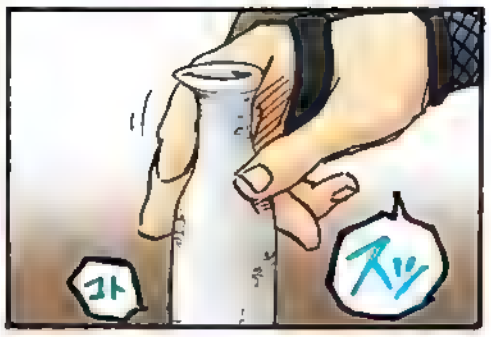
HERE YA GO!

……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AAH! NICE, LOOKS DELICIOUS!

THE DAIKON RADISH'S READY!

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MMM!

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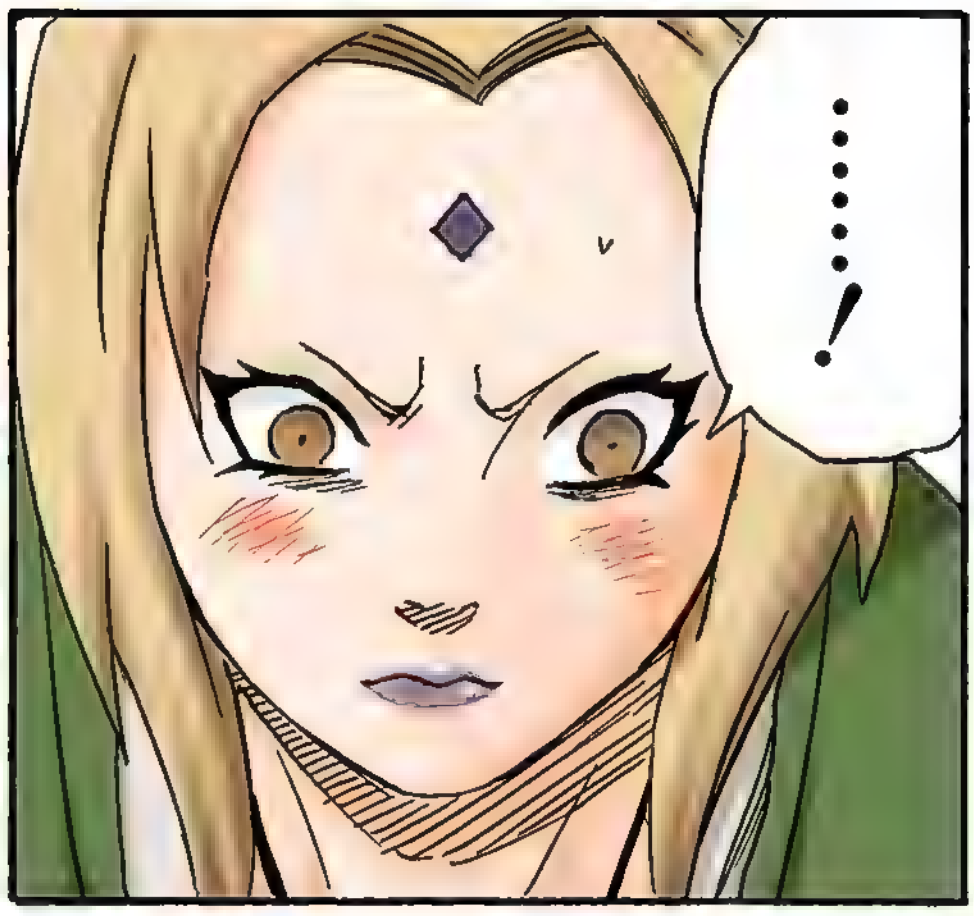

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162：A VULNERABLE HEART...!!

...YEESH

.....

MISTER! IT'S MORNING!

WAKE UP ALREADY, WILL YA!!

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ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!!

M... MISTER?!

ドサッ

HEY?!

그그냑

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グデッ

ナンバー
162：
A VULNERABLE HEART...!!

NARUTO

-ナルト-

LADY TSUNADE ...?!

...IT'S JUST AS JIRAIYA SAID...

I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE SUCH A SILLY BET.

HE'S SEVERELY EXHAUSTED...

...AND HIS RIGHT PALM'S BEEN BURNED BY CHAKRA...

SWOO SWOO

AT THIS RATE, HE... PROBABLY WON'T WAKE UP UNTIL THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

.....

HO HO.. I SHOCKED MYSELF WITH MY OWN PASSIONATE REACTION...

I WAS SUCH A FOOL.

PLEASE...

.....

.....

...DO NOT GO TOMORROW!

...LADY TSUNADE! DON'T BE SILENT! PLEASE SAY SOMETHING!

WHY?! WHY WON'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?!

IF... YOU INSIST ON GOING...

.....

...WHAT WOULD YOU DO ABOUT IT?

GRR

EVEN IN EXCHANGE FOR MY LIFE...

...I WOULD STOP YOU!

SHIZUNE...

DON'T YOU DARE USE THAT TONE WITH ME...!

SWEAT

HUH?

SKREE

KLOD

VOOSH

...WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?

.....

...IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD THING FOR YOU TO KILL HER.

THAT ATTENDANT OF TSUNADE'S...

IT WOULD BE MOST BOTHERSOME TO BE INTERRUPTED DURING OUR NEGOTIA-TIONS...

.....!

SWISH

ZWISH

SKREECH

WHAPP

...NARUTO...?

HEY!

HEY YOU!

UH...IT'S MONDAY...

WH... WHAT DAY IS TODAY?!

うわっ!

O... OH NO!!

AT THIS RATE, HE... PROBABLY WON'T WAKE UP UNTIL THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

.....

EVER SINCE I WAS A KID, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO RECOVER FROM PRACTICALLY ANY INJURY AFTER ONLY A SINGLE NIGHT'S SLEEP!!

.....

YOU FEEL OKAY?

WHAT?!

THAT'S RIGHT... WE'VE GOT NO TIME TO LOSE!

TODAY'S THE PROMISED DAY!

I MAY NOT HAVE PERFECTED IT IN TRAINING YET, BUT THERE'S NOTHING LIKE GAME DAY PRESSURE...

WHERE'S THAT ANNOYING OLD LADY?!

BUT NEVER MIND ME...

THAT'S RIGHT... THIS BODY HOSTS THE NINE-TAILED...

ズキッ

OWW...

NARUTO, YOU STAY HERE!!

!!

!!!

!

YOU'RE...!

WHAT...?!

HUF

HUF

HUF

...HOLD UP, SHIZUNE...!

TSUNADE DRUGGED MY DRINK...!

NOT ONLY CAN I NOT CALL UP MY CHAKRA PROPERLY, BUT MY BODY'S SO NUMB I CAN'T EVEN HOLD CHOPSTICKS RIGHT!

.....

SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN COMPOUND A TASTELESS AND ODORLESS DRUG THAT CAN BE USED AGAINST OTHER SHINOBI.

SHE MAY BE RUSTY, BUT SHE'S STILL A MEDIC SPECIALIST...

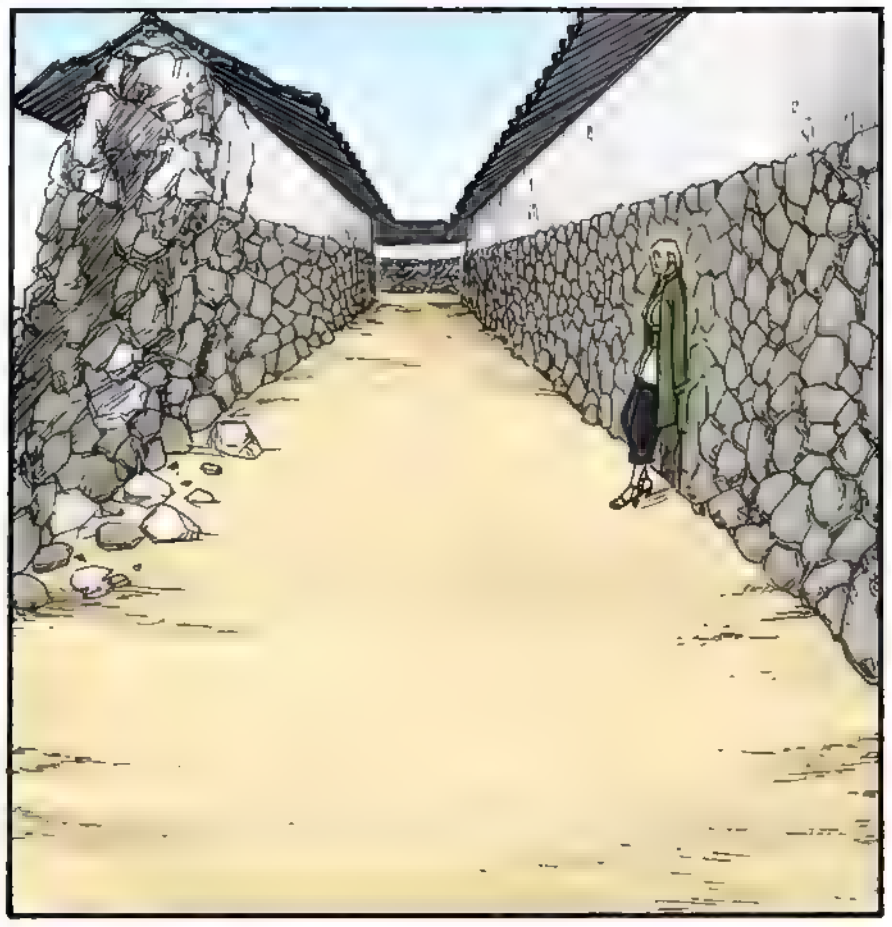
...ALTHOUGH I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE WAS ABLE TO SLIP IT TO ME, NO MATTER HOW DRUNK I WAS!

SO WRONG, MAN!!

YOU, WHO KEEPS BRAGGING ABOUT HOW GREAT A NINJA HE IS?!

SHUT UP!

DID YOU FALL FOR SOME PERVY ATTACK OR SOME-THING?!



...NOW THIS IS REALLY GETTING TROUBLESOME...MY BEST COURSE IS WITHDRAW AND REPORT TO LORD OROCHIMARU...

...I WOULD NEVER HAVE GUESSED THAT LORD JIRAIYA HIMSELF WOULD SHOW UP HERE...

...ARE HERE... INTERESTING...

EVEN YOU, NARUTO...

.....

SO, SHIZUNE!

.....

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油

!

I WANTED TO TRUST LADY TSUNADE... THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T SPEAK UP SOONER.

.....

BUT NOW...

OROCHIMARU ?!

WHAT ALL YOU'VE BEEN CHATTING WITH OROCHIMARU ABOUT.

WHY DON'T YOU START SPILLING IT?

SWSH

I'M COMING TOO!

SURE THING!

I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING ON THE WAY!!

THERE'S VERY LITTLE TIME... PLEASE COME WITH ME!

スッ

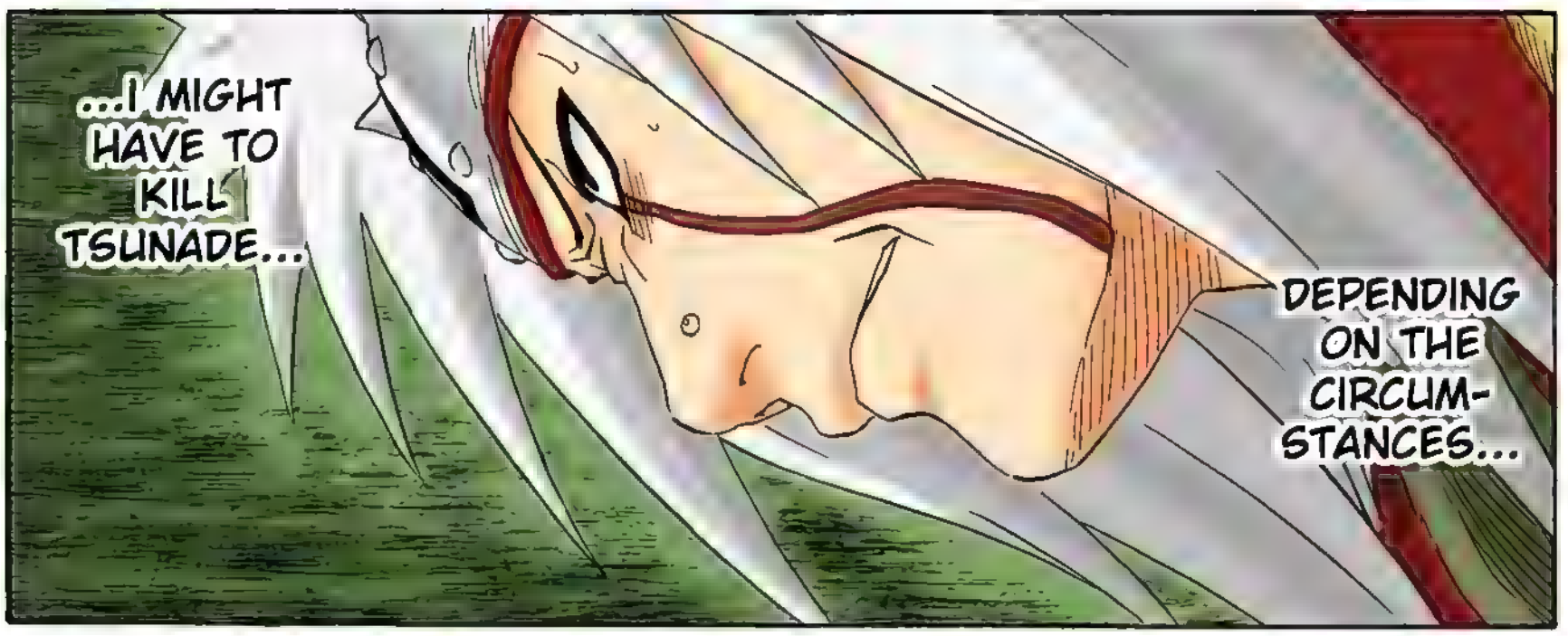
..YOUR RE-SPONSE?

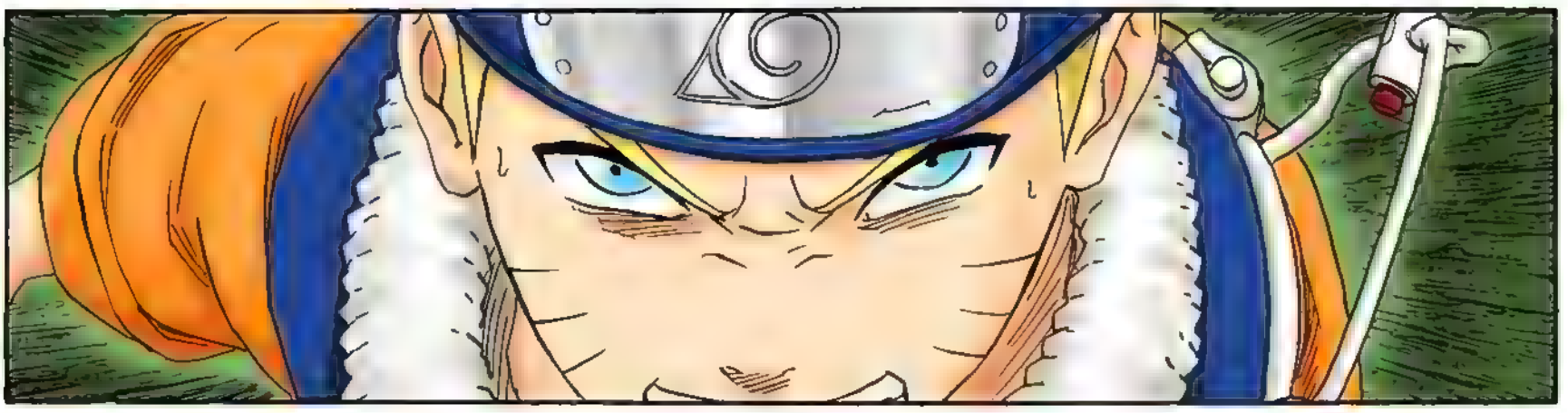
THIS COULD BE BAD...

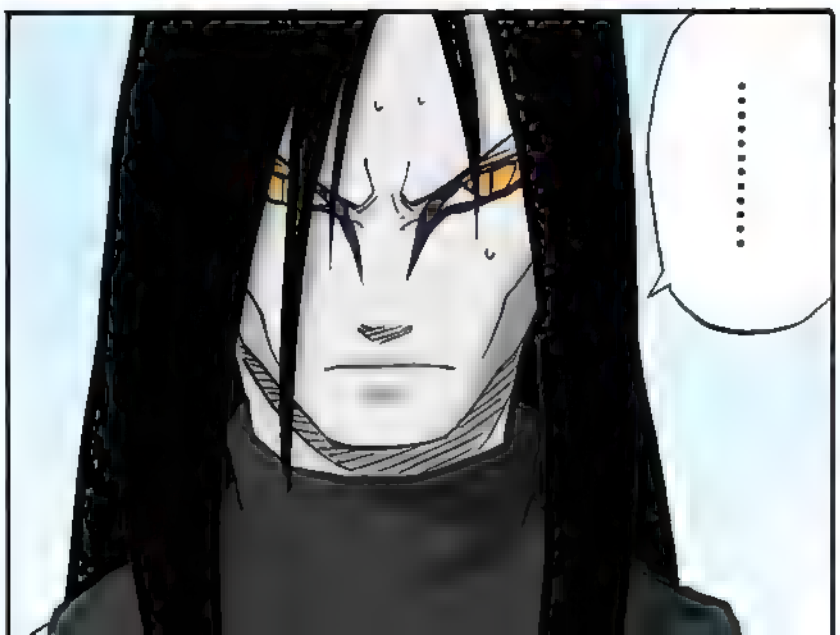
OF COURSE SHE'S GOING TO SAY NO!

HAHAHA

...STILL GRASPING ON TO THEIR MEMORY...
TSUNADE'S PROBABLY...


...I MIGHT HAVE TO KILL TSUNADE...
DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUM-STANCES...

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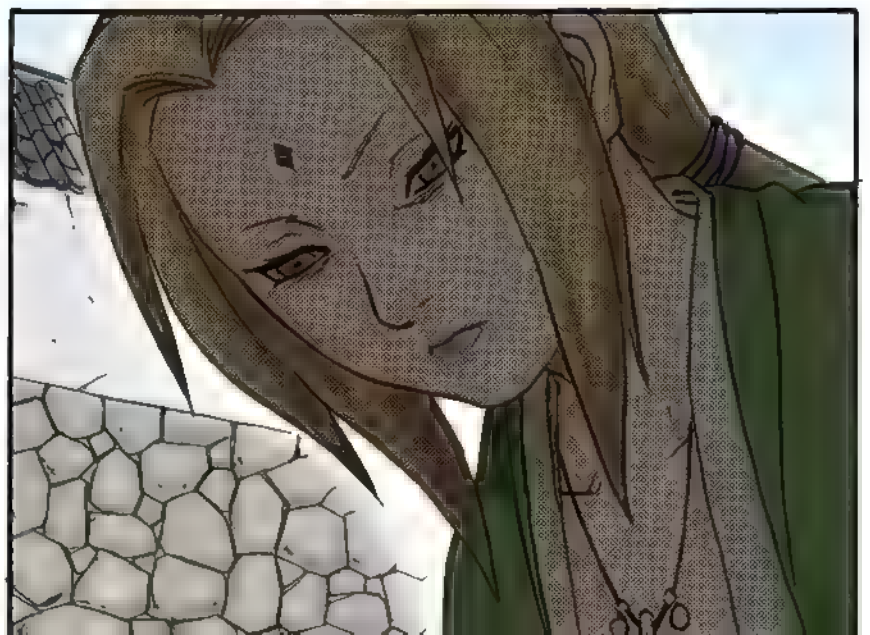
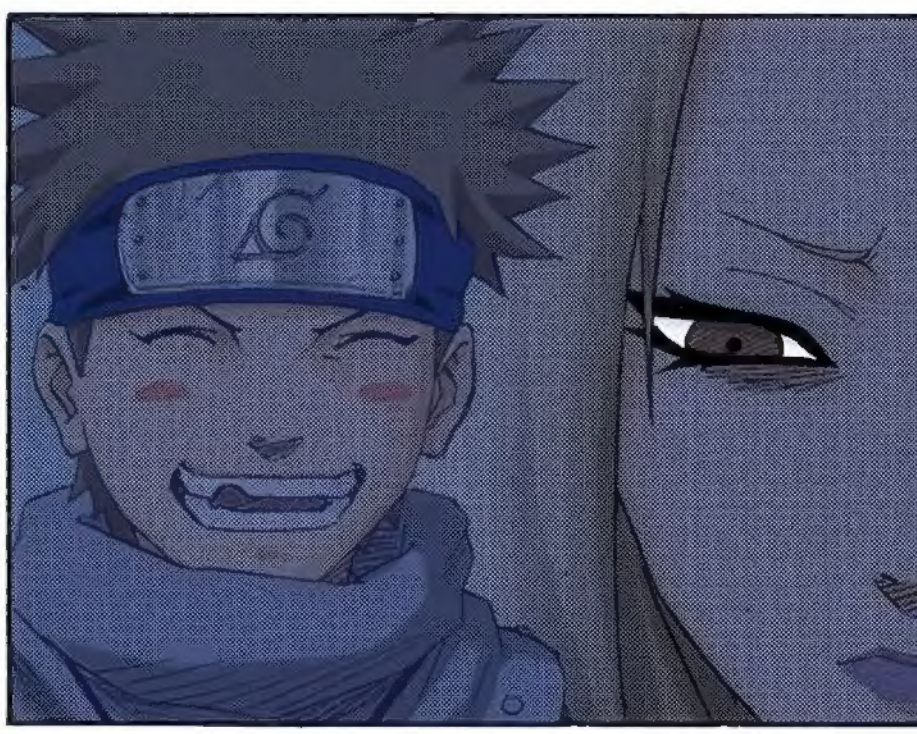


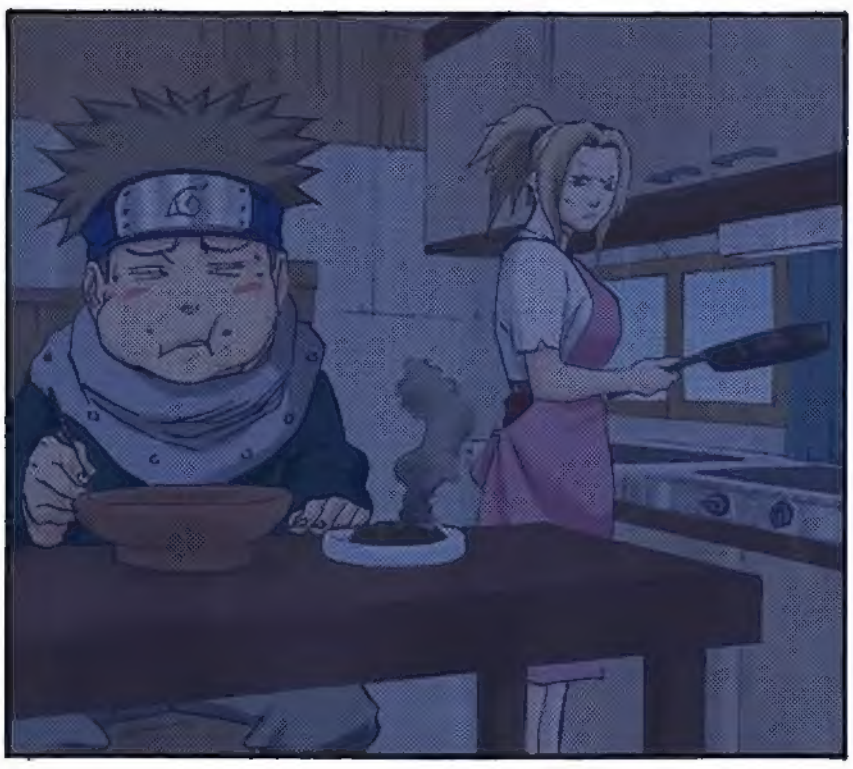
..BUT IN RETURN, LAY OFF THE VILLAGE.

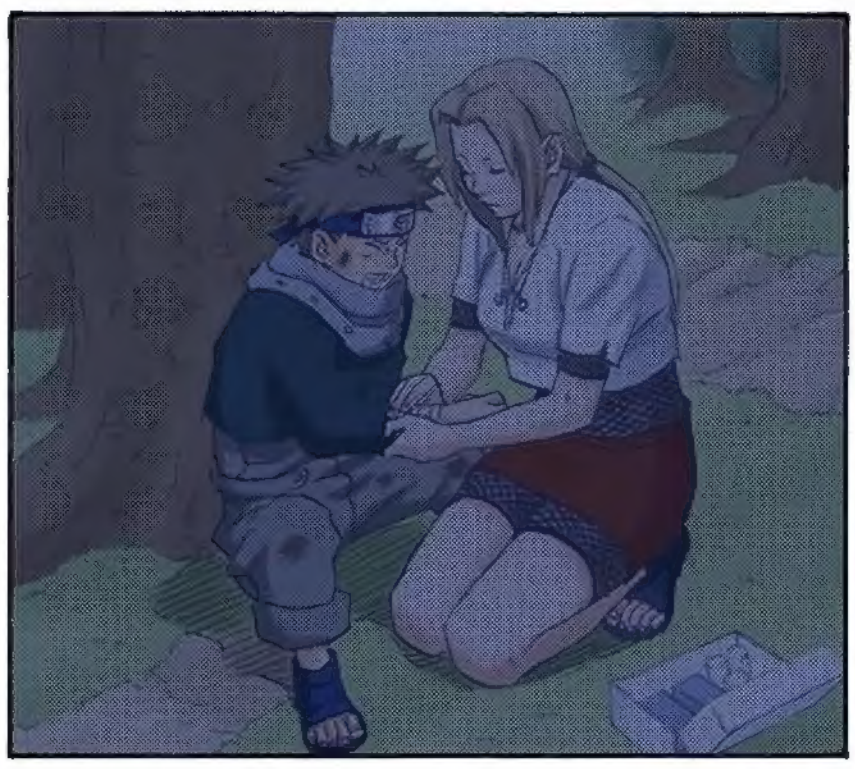
I'LL FIX YOUR ARMS...

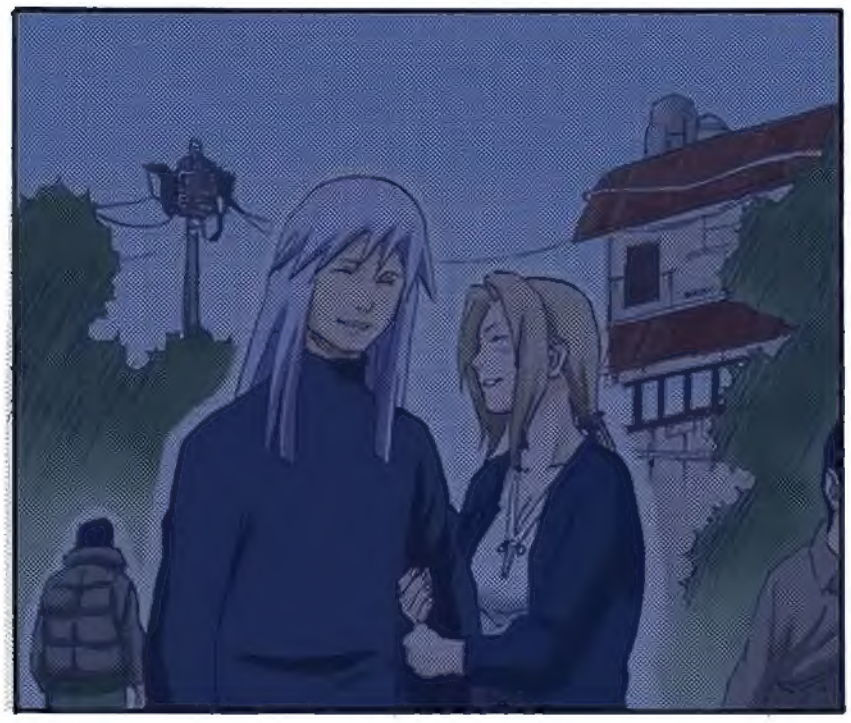
...CACKLE CACKLE... VERY WELL.

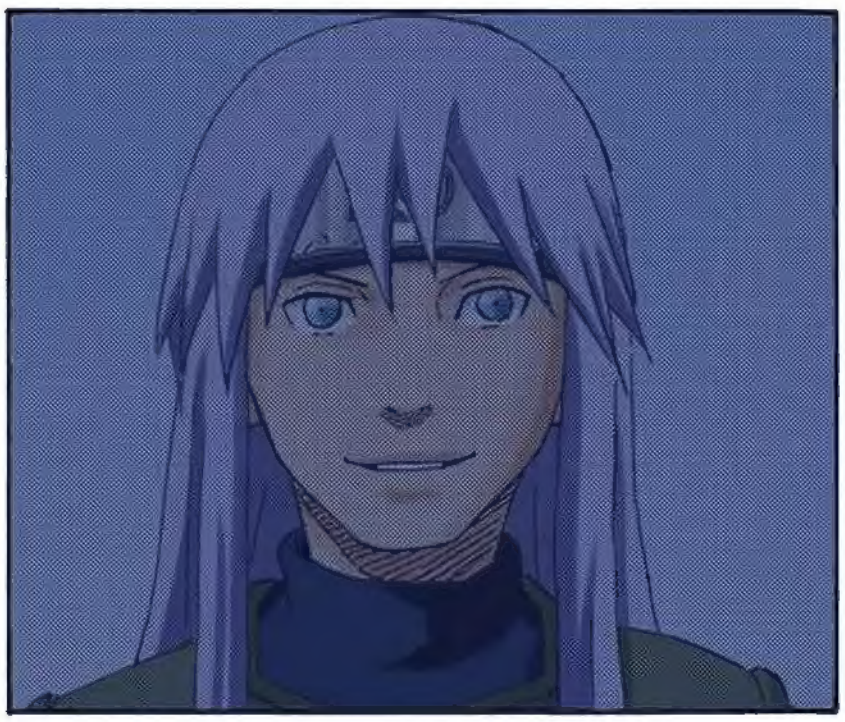
.....

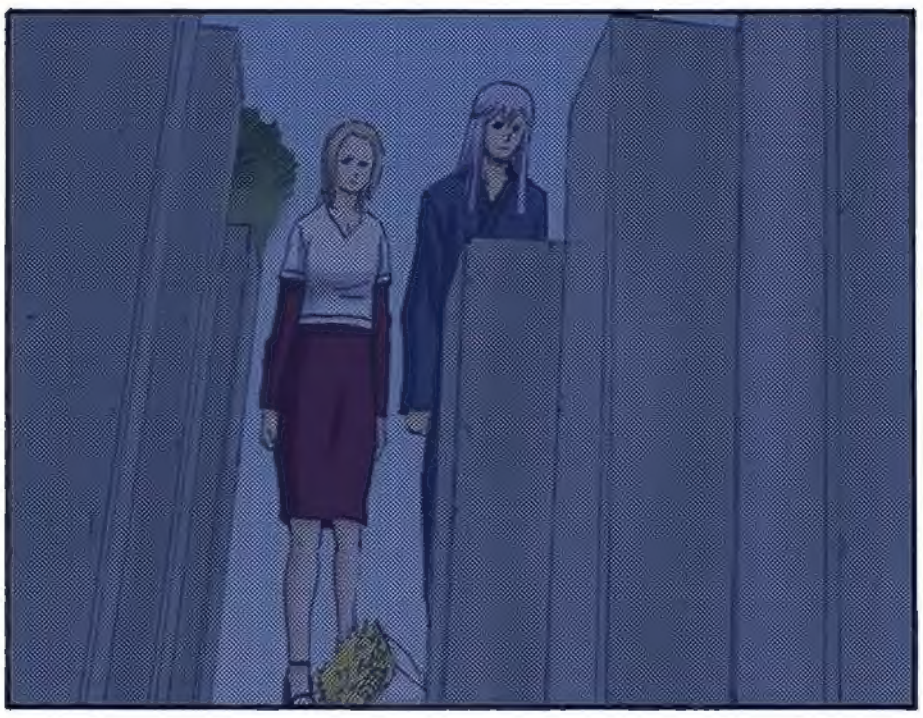


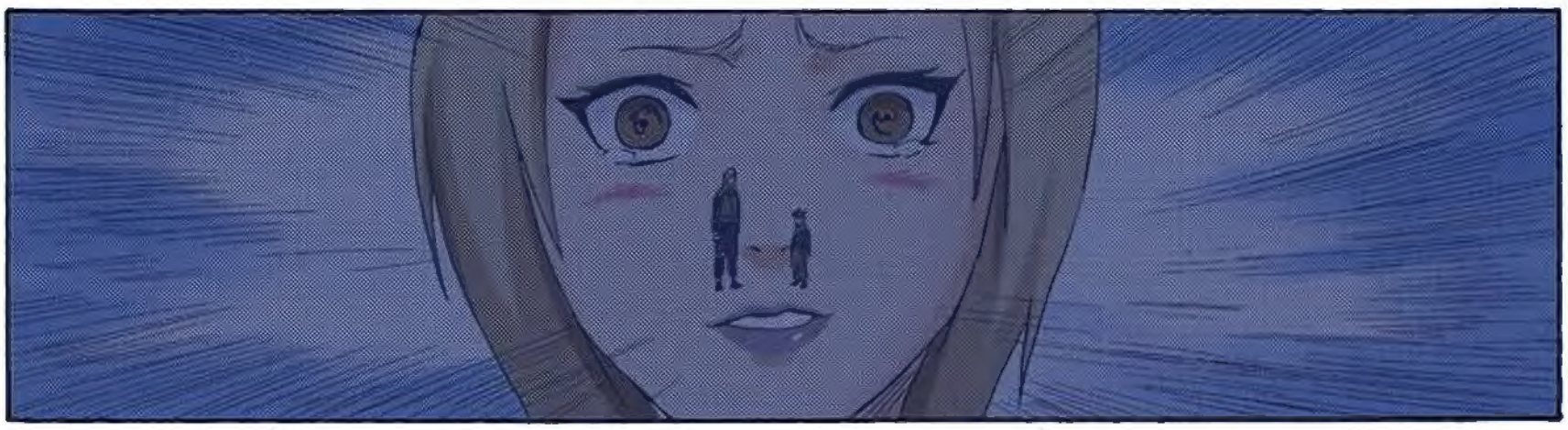




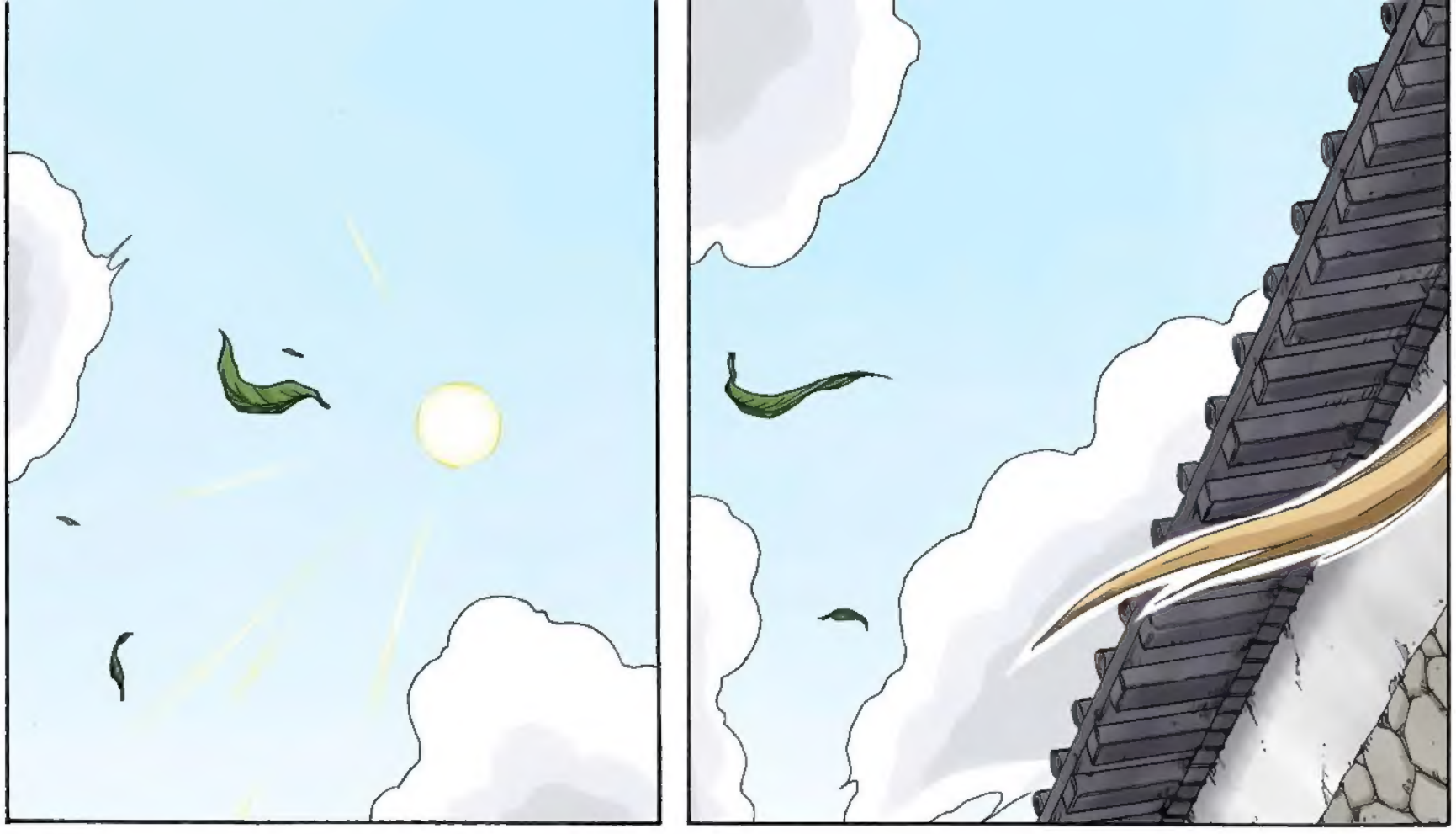


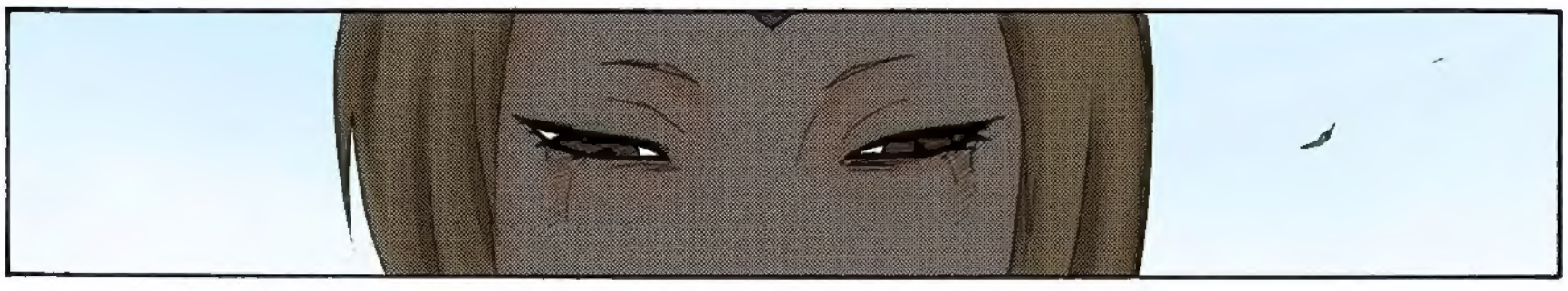


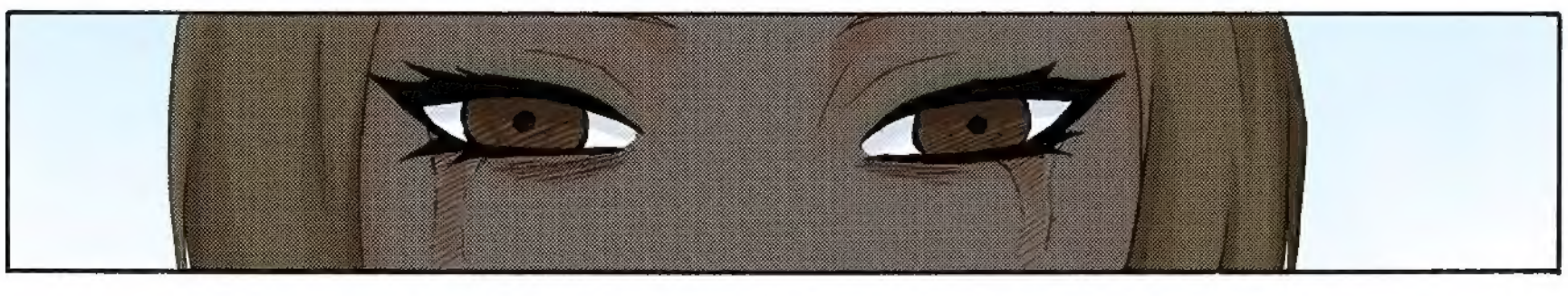




WAFT







TO BE CONTINUED IN NARUTO VOLUME 19!!